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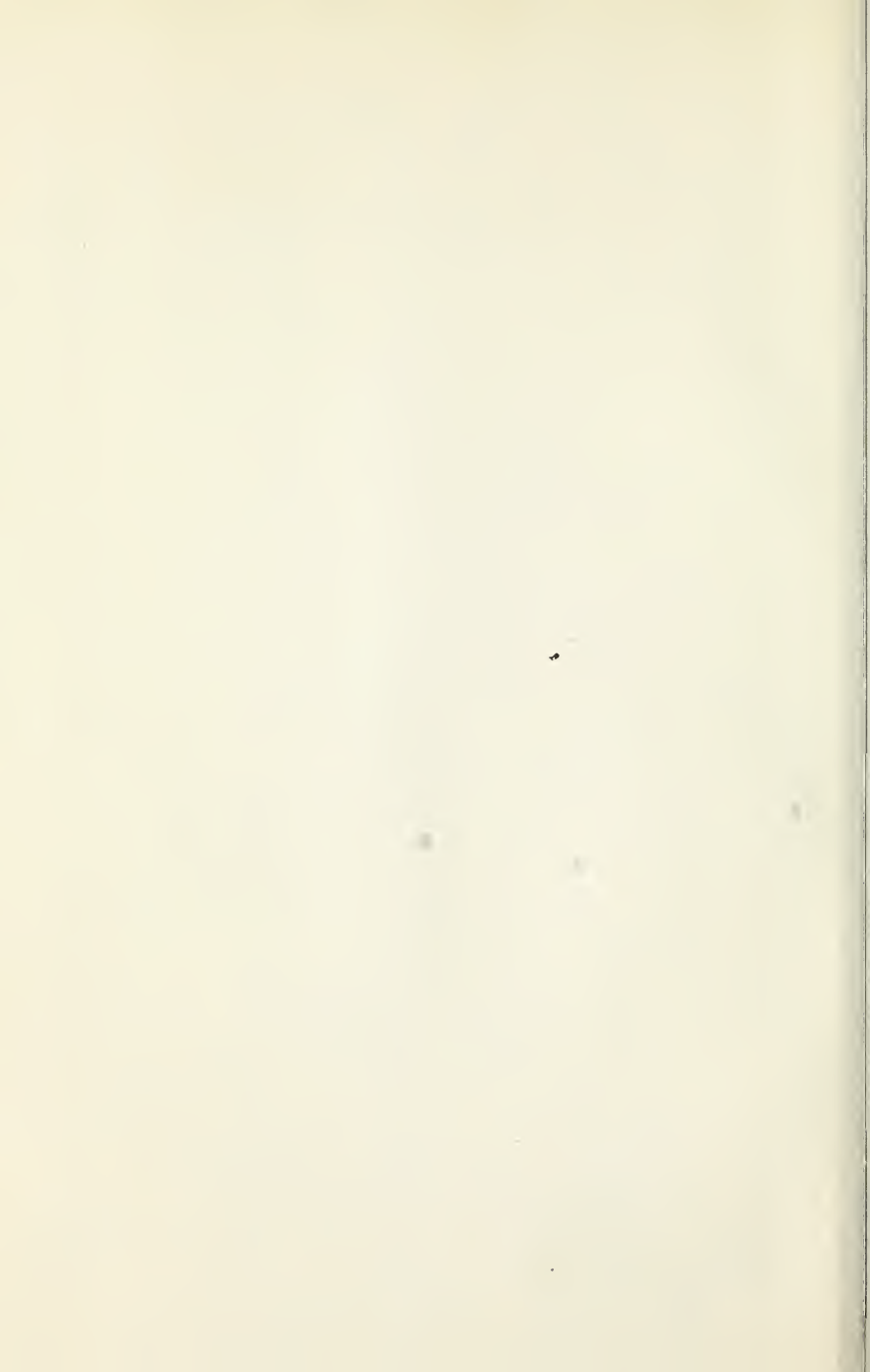


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AN

# HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

PALMER, MASS., JULY 5, 1852,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

Centennial Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town.

~~~~~  
BY THOMAS WILSON,

FIRST PASTOR OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.  
~~~~~

PUBLISHED BY VOTE OF THE TOWN.

LOWELL:

S. J. VARNEY, (27 CENTRAL STREET,) PRINTER.

1855.

# THE JOURNAL OF THE

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 1918

CHICAGO, ILL., U.S.A.

Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance

Entered as Second-Class Matter, June 26, 1901  
Postoffice at Chicago, Ill., under special permission of Postoffice Department  
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917  
Authorized by Act of October 3, 1917




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WILSON, THOMAS, 1822-1899.

An historical address delivered at Palmer,  
Mass., July 5, 1852, in commemoration of the  
centennial anniversary of the incorporation of  
the town. Lowell, S.J. Varney, printer, 1855.  
60p. 21cm.

56-474

  
SHELF CARD



## CORRESPONDENCE.

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PALMER, August 25th, 1852.

DEAR SIR :—

The undersigned were appointed, at a meeting of the citizens of Palmer, and others, on the 5th of July last, being the occasion of the Centennial Celebration of the organization of said town, to solicit a copy of your Address, delivered at that time, for publication.

We hope it may be your pleasure to gratify the citizens of this town, as well as numerous others, interested in the history of Palmer, by furnishing, at your earliest convenience, a copy of your very interesting and invaluable Historical Address, for the purpose aforesaid.

Be assured, Sir, of the very high personal regard entertained for yourself and family.

REV. THOMAS WILSON.

J. B. MERRICK,  
F. MORGAN,  
FRED. T. WALLACE.

AUGUST 27th, 1852.

GENTLEMEN :—

The Historical Address which the citizens of the place, from their personal and local interest, have directed you to obtain for publication, is cheerfully placed at your disposal. In complying with your request, so cordially conveyed, I sincerely regret that it was not in my power,—from the brief time allowed for the preparation of a discourse of this nature, and from the pressure of imperative professional duties,—to render more fitting honor to the character and doings of the early fathers of the town. I hope, however, that what is here done may rescue from utter oblivion, important and interesting facts connected with their history; and that it may furnish, to the present and future inhabitants of Palmer, an acceptable, though slight and inadequate, memento of the deeds and virtues of their ancestral generations.

With sentiments of respect and esteem I remain

Yours, very truly,

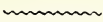
THOMAS WILSON.

TO MESSRS. J. B. MERRICK,  
F. MORGAN,  
FRED. T. WALLACE,

} *Committee of the Citizens of Palmer.*



## P R E F A C E .



THE citizens of Palmer, at their annual meeting in March, 1852, appointed Rev. THOMAS WILSON to prepare an historical account of the early settlement and subsequent progress of the town; to be given as an Address, in connection with other services that were to be held, commemorative of the first CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY of the INCORPORATION of the TOWN of PALMER.\*

In accordance with this appointment, the following brief and unavoidably imperfect sketch was prepared, and delivered before a large gathering of the citizens, in a grove near the Town-House, on Monday, July 5th; though the appropriate time for the centenary celebration would have been on the 23d of January previous. This filial duty would more justly have belonged to some native of the place; or at least, to one whom long residence among the people, and an intimate acquaintance with the aged especially, would have better qualified for the work. As it was assigned otherwise, however, the commission has been executed as well as the circumstances of the case would allow.

The records of the original Proprietors, together with those of the town and the first parish; and the journals of the Colonial and State Legislatures, in the archives of the Commonwealth, have been the principal sources from which the materials have been gathered. Valuable assistance, also, was derived from "Parker's History of Londonderry, N. H." in regard to the emigration to this country, from the north of Ireland, of the Scotch Presbyterians by whom this town was chiefly settled. Other sources of information have been carefully and laboriously examined; but much yet remains to be done to do full justice to the departed worthies of the town; and the feeling of regret is an honest one, which the gleaner of these historical relics entertains, that a more skillful pen was not employed to put these pleasant but fading reminiscences of past generations in a more acceptable and enduring form.

It was somewhat appropriate, however, that one whose own birth was in that land whence the worthy and patriotic fathers of this town primarily originated—"auld Scotia"—should be selected to pay due respect to the virtue, heroism, and indomitable love of civil and religious liberty, which characterized the noble dead. The grateful work, therefore, was engaged in with something of filial reverence and ancestral pride.

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\*See Appendix C.



# ADDRESS.

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“THE Ancient of days” has implanted in man a reverence for antiquity. This feeling is alike honorable in him who manifests it, and respectful to the object or person toward which it is shown. He who placed this graceful sentiment in the nature of the human race, allows it to be cherished in every form and degree which can harmonize with the paramount law of virtuous progress.

Whatever is *old* is to man, who is himself so short-lived, invested with peculiar interest. To gratify his taste for the antique, he will sometimes, like “Old Mortality,” sit down among the crumbling tombstones of ancient worthies, and patiently re-chisel the half obliterated inscriptions; at other times, he will traverse the most perilous seas, and scale the almost inaccessible mountains, and brave even appalling dangers, to look upon some mouldering relic of by-gone ages; or to feel the inspiration, flowing in upon the soul, from some scene famed far back in the records of time. Hallowed emotions are kindled in the heart by such contemplations. Past ages come rolling back as we stand in the midst of scenes thus “hoar with grey antiquity.” And even though we may never visit them in person, the ever-ready and nimble imagination — that wierd and subtle power of the mind — will, at our bidding, present them in visionary but imposing array.

It is, indeed, true that the annals of this town present few, if any, of those stirring events which claim a prominent place on the page of history. No fierce battle fought upon our soil, has ever emblazoned its name in lines of blood. No wonderful curiosity of nature has ever brought hither a crowd of sight-seeing travelers. No brilliant achievement in art or arms, has ever rendered any of its sons illustrious. No famous production in literature, or memorable discovery in science,

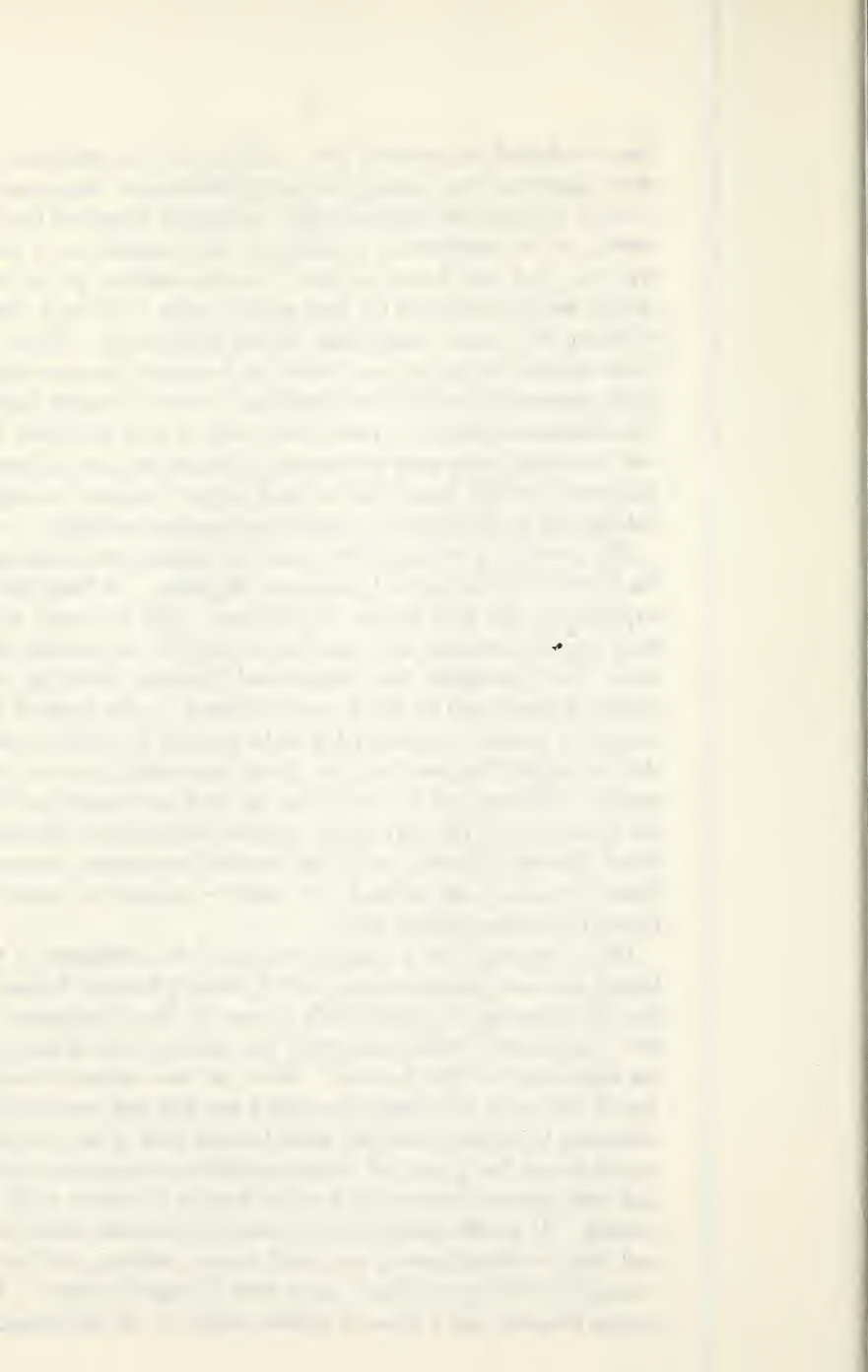




has ever claimed its paternity here. But yet, in this small and nowise conspicuous town, among the goodly fellowship of sister communities in this good old Commonwealth, events have transpired that are worthy to be remembered; especially by the descendants of those who here lived, and loved, and died. As the centuries go by, it is well to recall the scenes of the past, and the actors in the busy drama of human life, whose remembrance is fast fading away. There has been exhibited on this soil, and within the bounds of this township, a noble endurance of privation and suffering; an heroic struggle against the difficulties incident to a pioneer life, such as were inevitable, but not less trying in the early settlements of this region; and a devoted patriotism amid the sorest trials — which ought to embalm the departed worthies in the hearts of a grateful and emulous posterity.

The principle of religious liberty was the leading central idea with the founders of this new and greatest of Republics. It found fitting exponents in the early settlers of this town. This sentiment, when fully roused, is stronger even than the love of civil and political freedom. That exemption from control and dictation, which the conscience demands, and for which men feel bound, by the hopes of life eternal, to contend, can hardly fail to be secured by resolute souls. As the English Puritans fled from their comfortable homes to this western wilderness, not so much from the civil government as from the hierarchy, and the laws which enforced conformity to the established Episcopal Church; so did the Scottish Covenanters — some of whose descendants are gathered here to-day — emigrate to escape religious rather than political evils.

Before entering upon a detailed account of the settlement of the largest and most prominent colony which virtually founded Palmer, it may be interesting to advert briefly to some of the circumstances in the "father-land," which constituted the leading cause of many of the settlements in New England. Even the most cursory examination of this point will clearly show that it was firm and conscientious adherence to religious principle, which brought most of our ancestors to this distant land; and led them to establish an empire whose chief and most glorious characteristic is entire freedom in matters of divine worship. It was for conscience's sake that they left their native land and their cherished homes; and, amid sorrow, suffering, and death, "sought a faith's pure shrine" upon these inhospitable shores. Religious toleration was a virtue in political ethics, to the attainment of



which the people of that age had not arrived. This principle, though confessedly just and wise, has been of slow growth. Hence in England, notwithstanding the light and influence of the ever-memorable Reformation, various laws were passed enjoining uniformity, not only in sentiment, but in the forms of religious worship; subjecting to severe penalties, all who refused obedience. The adherents of even the *reformed* religion had not yet acquired that truly catholic spirit which gives to every one the "right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience." Submission to the most intolerant statutes was enforced with such extreme vigor, that a voluntary exile seemed to many the best mode of escaping from the penalties of non-compliance.

The stringency of the laws, and the relentlessness of their execution, excited the strong and determined resistance of many in all ranks, who fearlessly withstood this encroachment upon their rights, demanding greater simplicity and purity of worship than that allowed by the established Church of England, hence, by way of reproach, they were called *Puritans*; and as their sufferings, under the oppressive acts which so chafed and galled their spirits, tended to deter any except the conscientious and sincere friends of Christ, and of the purer worship, from uniting with them,—serving thus to sift the precious wheat from the worthless chaff,—the term, though otherwise intended, became one of honor! It was strikingly significant of the superior purity, both of their religion and their lives. Their deep and inwrought dislike to the arbitrary enactments of their government, induced our Puritan fathers to seek in this then newly discovered land a settlement, founded on the principles of religious toleration, as well as of civil liberty. It was a determination, fixed and resolute, not to submit to dictation in matters of faith and modes of worship which prompted their self-denying course. They preferred to hazard everything, to endure anything, rather than surrender this right, which they prized dearer than life itself, of "freedom to worship God." With an inextinguishable thirst for liberty in the moral as well as in the natural and social world, they could not bear to be thus trammelled in their religious privileges. No other motive save that of duty was sufficiently powerful to influence these men to abandon all that was endeared to them by the associations of home, and kindred, and country, for a hostile wilderness beyond the ocean. It was a pure and holy purpose which prompted them to make the sacrifices they

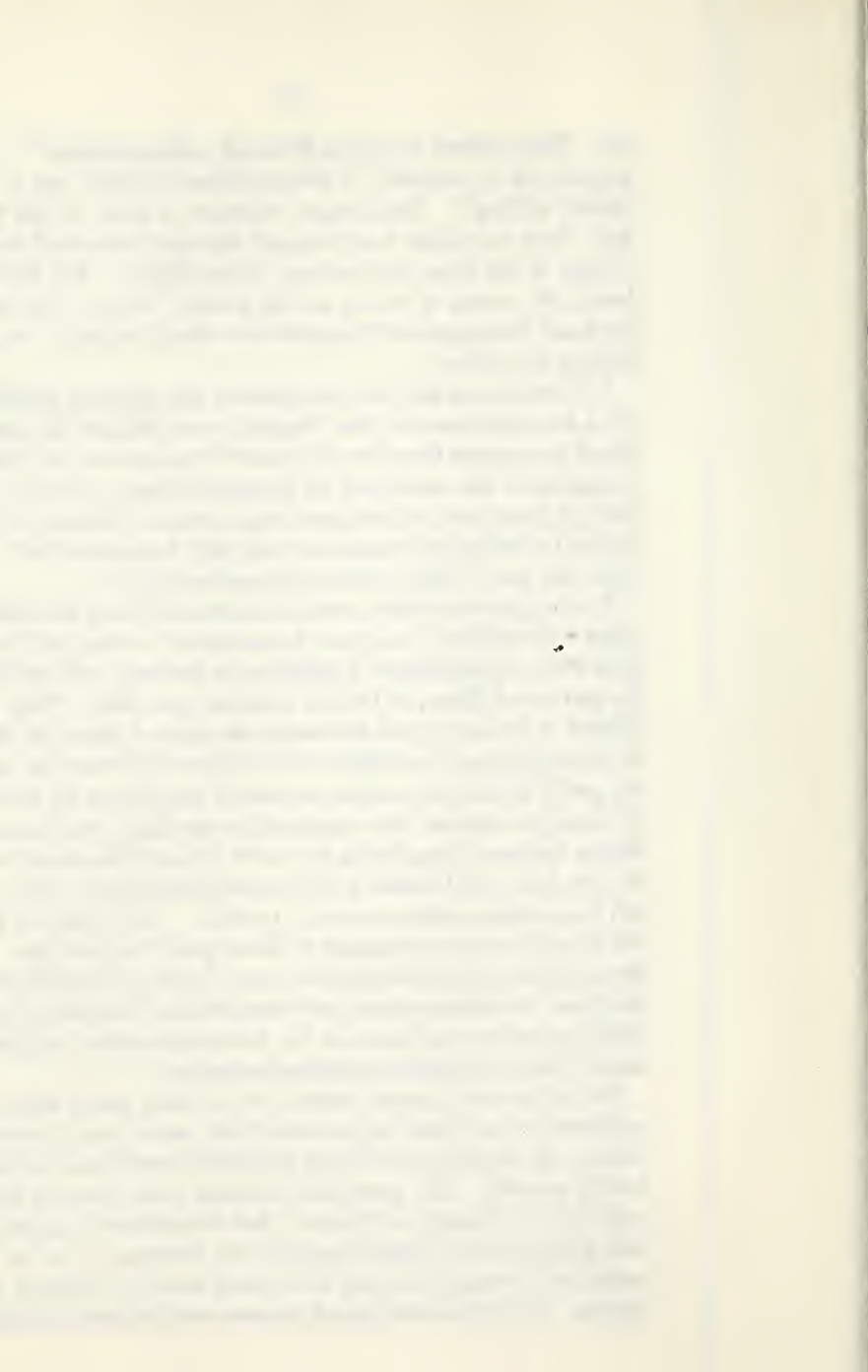


did. They claimed "an open Bible and a free conscience." Their purpose was to establish "a Church without a Bishop, and a State without a King." They sought, therefore, a home in this far-off land, where they might freely enjoy all that their hearts held dear, as citizens of the State and members of the Church. For this they braved the storms of winter, and the perils of the sea; and on the bleak and frozen rocks of Plymouth they raised an altar at once to freedom and to God!

It is indeed true that the Presbyterians, who primarily settled this and a few other towns in New England, were different in forms of church government from that noble band of christians of the Congregational order who constituted the Plymouth Colony; yet in all their views of divine truth and religious duty, in zeal and firmness to resist civil and ecclesiastical domination, they fully harmonized with each other, and were "fellow sufferers for conscience sake."

The emigrants who chiefly settled the town of Palmer were what is called "Scotch-Irish," being the descendants of a colony of Protestants which emigrated from Argyleshire, in Scotland, and settled in the province of Ulster, in Ireland, about the year 1612. They were induced to go there by the fact that in the reign of James the First, on the suppression of a rebellion of his Catholic subjects in the northern part of Ireland, two millions of acres of land, almost the whole of the six upper counties, were transferred to the King, who thereupon became desirous of supplanting the native rebels by those who would be more loyal, and therefore held out strong inducements to his other and more reliable subjects to occupy the land. His Scotch and English dependents were encouraged by liberal grants to leave their own homes and settle upon this forfeited tract of land, as it was expected that those turbulent spirits in the "Emerald Isle," who had so often defied the authority and arms of the British government, might by means of this colonization be awed and controlled.

This will account, in some measure, for the bitter enmity which was manifested by the Catholics, the native Irish, toward these Protestant settlers, who occupied the soil from which their countrymen had been forcibly expelled. The great Irish rebellion which occurred thirty years after, in the reign of Charles I., had its origin in the animosity with which the Irish Catholics regarded the Protestants, and in the natural and burning desire they felt to wrest back their ancestral possessions. The plot of this general massacre was fortunately discover-



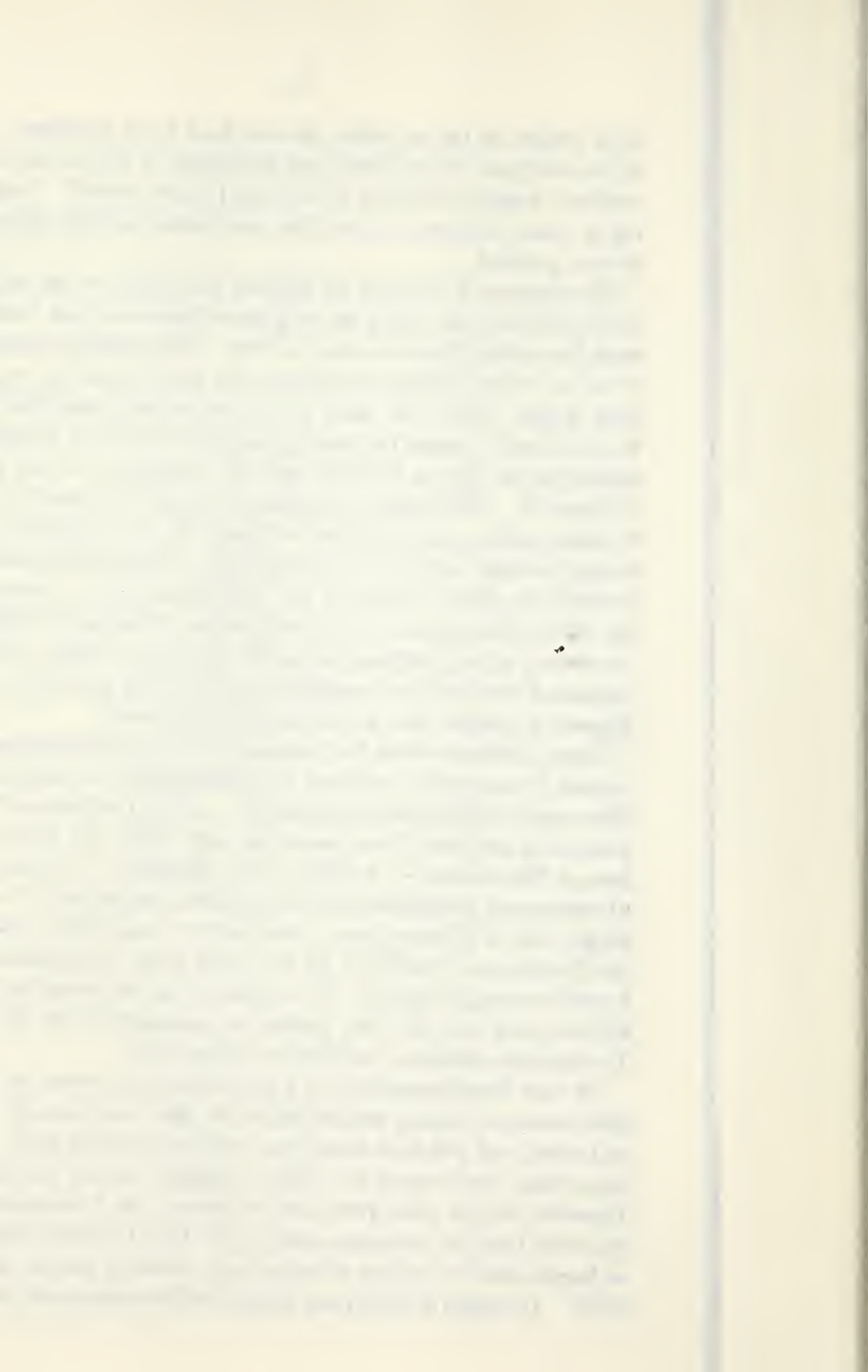


ed in Dublin, on the day before the time fixed for its execution ; but in the other parts of the island, and particularly in Ulster, the most cruel and wanton destruction of lives and property ensued. According to some historians, no less than one hundred and fifty thousand persons perished.

The emigrants from across the channel, who settled on the lands of the expatriated Irish during the early part of the seventeenth century, went there chiefly from mercenary motives. They received accessions from time to time of their countrymen, who were impelled by the like hope of gain. But in the latter part of that century, many fled there from Scotland to escape the bitter persecutions and horrid barbarities inflicted by the Roman Catholics upon the Covenanters, in the reign of James II. This bigoted and infatuated monarch exhibited a hatred to Protestantism, and a devotion to Papacy, the most excessive ; and during his whole reign strove most zealously to eradicate the one and establish the other. No one of the Puritan sects was so particularly the object of his aversion as the Presbyterians of Scotland. While he was viceroy of that kingdom, during the reign of his brother, he had persecuted them with an unrelenting severity which he was in nowise disposed to mitigate after he had ascended the throne.

Those districts in which the Covenanters were most numerous were overrun by companies of soldiers, who practised the most wanton cruelties upon all who fell into their hands. Among the leaders of these persecuting and blood-thirsty bands, the most noted was James Graham, of Claverhouse ;—"a soldier," says Macauley, "of distinguished courage and professional skill, but rapacious and profane, of violent temper, and of obdurate heart ; who has left a name which, wherever the Scottish race is settled on the face of the globe, is mentioned with a peculiar energy of hatred. To recapitulate all the crimes by which this man, and men like him, goaded the peasantry of the Western Lowlands into madness, would be an endless task."

By such brutal persecution, in a land most dear to them, the immediate ancestors of many who settled in this place were induced to flee to Ireland, and join their countrymen who had preceded them. But even there, their repose was short. Although during the time of Cromwell, and for a few years after his decease, the Protestants were protected from the inveterate enmity of the Irish Catholics, they were at length called to undergo privations and sufferings almost unparalleled. The pages of history can furnish but few instances of such un-

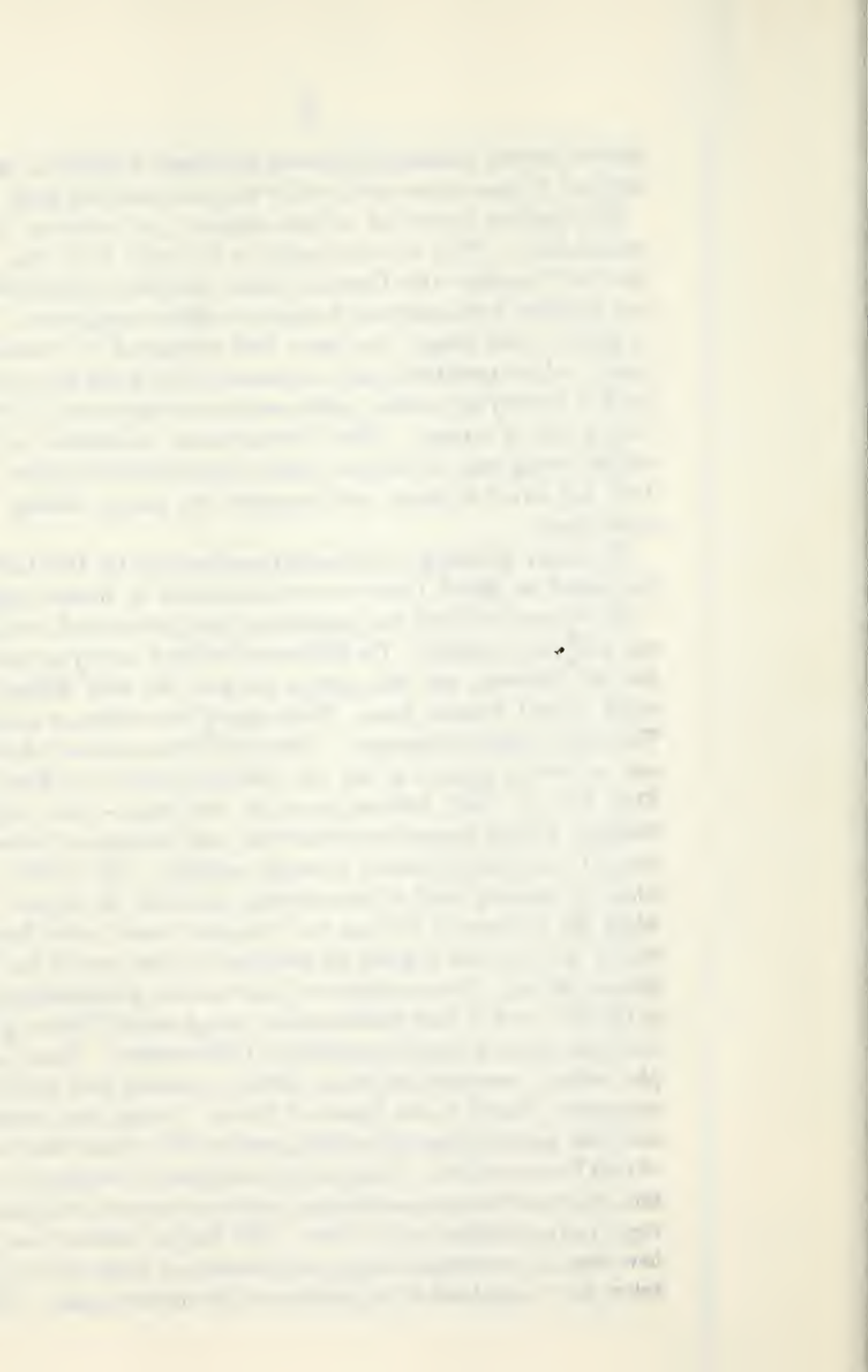




daunted bravery, unwavering firmness, and heroic fortitude as were displayed by them in the midst of their fiery and protracted trials.

Their position, in the land of their adoption, was everyway most uncomfortable. They were surrounded by the native Irish, who adhered with tenacity to the Church of Rome, while they regarded their new neighbors with embittered feelings not only as supplanters, but as heretics; and though they were then subjugated to Protestant power, and not permitted openly to persecute as they had done, yet a spirit of hostility still existed, which sought every opportunity to vent itself in acts of revenge. Many circumstances, in addition to the original strong traits of character which separate the Scotch from the Irish, had served to inflame and strengthen the enmity existing between them.

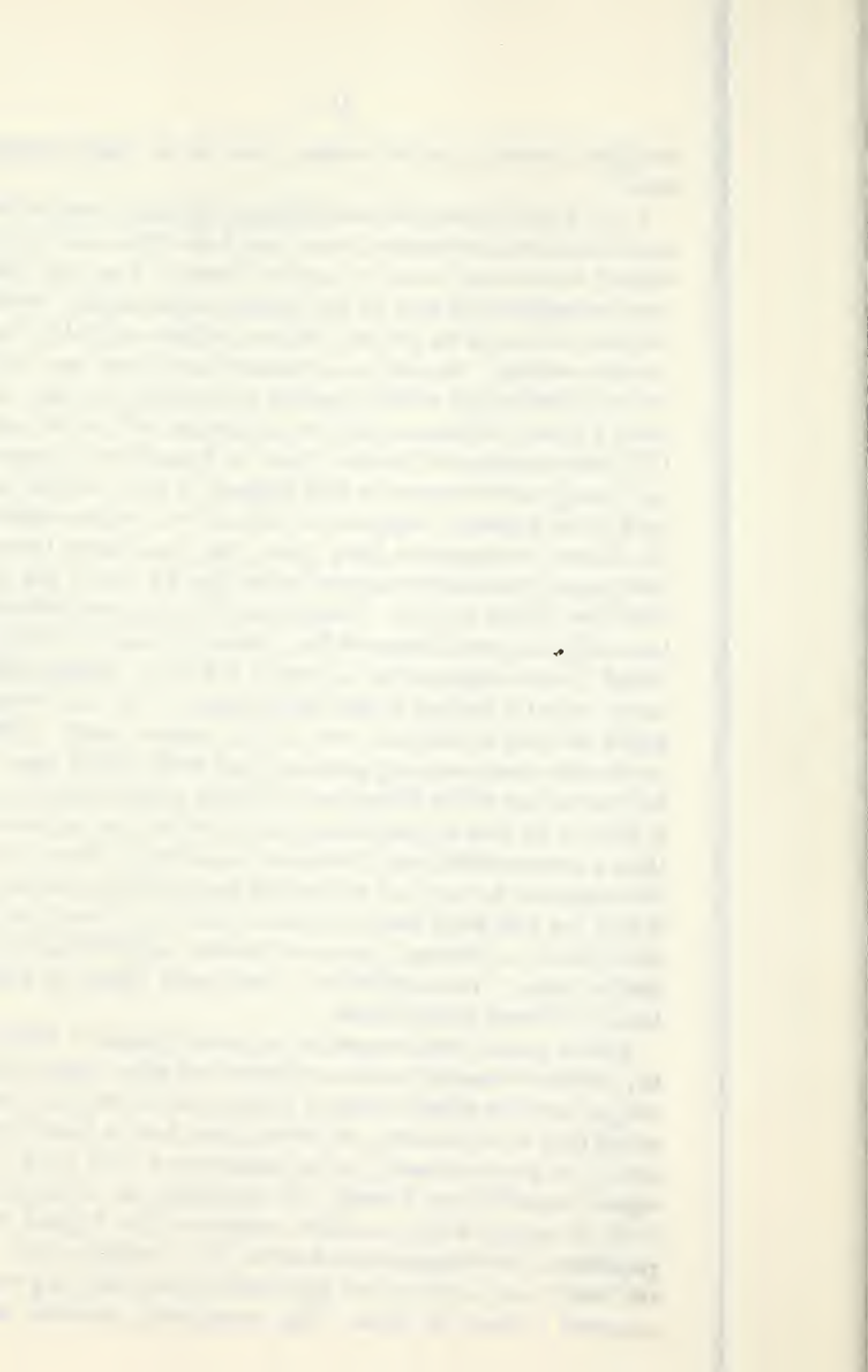
MACAULEY, adverting to the hostility manifested by the Irish Catholics toward the British Protestants who had settled in Ireland, says: "On the same soil dwelt two populations, locally intermixed, morally and politically sundered. The difference of religion was by no means the only difference, and was perhaps not even the chief difference, which existed between them. They sprang from different stocks. They spoke different languages. They had different national characters, as strongly opposed as any two national characters in Europe. They were in widely different stages of civilization — there could, therefore, be little sympathy between them, and centuries of calamities and wrongs had generated a strong antipathy. The relation in which the minority stood to the majority, resembled the relation in which the followers of William the Conqueror stood to the Saxon churls, or the relation in which the followers of Cortez stood to the Indians of Mexico. The appellation of Irish was then given exclusively to the Celts, and to those families which, though not of Celtic origin, had in the course of ages degenerated into Celtic manners. These people, probably somewhat less than a million in number; had, with few exceptions, adhered to the Church of Rome. Among them resided about two hundred thousand colonists, proud of their Saxon blood and of their Protestant faith. The great preponderance of numbers on one side, was more than compensated by a great superiority of intelligence, vigor, and organization on the other. The English settlers seem to have been, in knowledge, energy, and perseverance, rather above than below the average level of the population of the mother country. The



aboriginal peasantry, on the contrary, were in an almost savage state."

It was in view of such evils and sufferings, experienced both in the land of their birth and adoption, that a large body of them were again disposed to leave their homes for another country. They were the more encouraged to do this, by the flattering representations which had come to them, of the civil and religious privileges enjoyed by the American colonies. In order to see whether these reports were correct, and whether they would be justified in removing; and also, to secure a place of settlement, they sent a messenger early in the year 1718, with an address to Governor Shute, of Massachusetts, expressing a strong desire to remove to New England, if they could be assured of the permanent enjoyment of their civil and religious rights. The desired encouragement being given, they immediately turned their property into money, embarked in five ships for Boston, and arrived there August 4, 1718. That portion of the emigrants who had been under the pastoral charge of Rev. James McGregor, in Ireland, wished to remain together that they might still enjoy religious ordinances under the ministry of their favorite teacher, who had accompanied his flock to their new home in this western world. After considerable search and many privations, they finally settled upon a fine tract of land in New Hampshire, which they named Londonderry, in honor of the town in Ireland from which they had just emigrated. Quite a number of this body of emigrants, on arriving at Boston, saw fit to remain in that city, and uniting with those of their countrymen of their own faith whom they found there, formed the "First Presbyterian Church and Society," over which the Rev. John Moorhead was installed pastor. It was styled the "Presbyterian Church in Long Lane," afterwards Federal Street.

Another portion of this company of emigrants repaired to Worcester, and there attempted to form a settlement and enjoy religious privileges, under the ministry of one of the four pastors who had accompanied them to this country; and although they were an industrious, orderly and pious community, yet in consequence of their being foreigners, especially from Ireland, and introducing the Presbyterian mode of worship, which was before unknown in New England, the prejudices of the Congregational churches, the "standing order" of the State, were so strong and bitter toward them, that they were compelled to leave the place. They consequently separated, and



were dispersed through the country. Some of these families settled in PALMER, others in Coleraine, some in Pelham, and a few in other towns in Massachusetts; and being joined by emigrants, from time to time, from the old country, formed those Presbyterian societies which existed for many years in those several places.

Such is a brief account of the origin of the principal colony which first settled within the limits of this town, about the year 1727. Some years previous to this, however, several families had entered upon the territory, and erected their humble log dwellings amid the primeval forest. The honor of being the *first* settler of Palmer, so far as I have been able to learn from documentary or traditional evidence, belongs to JOHN KING. He probably came here sometime during the year 1717. A letter from his mother, dated "Ednars-ton, (Eng.) April 20, 1718,"\* speaks of him as being married and having one son, born, it is supposed, in Boston. She refers to the "hardships" he had experienced since he left home, and expresses her sorrow to hear that he "lived in such a desert place, without neighbors." She says also, "I shall never overcome my grief to think you are so far off;" but with a mother's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of her child, she adds, "I am glad to hear you live under the ministry of the gospel; I pray God to give you grace to improve by it." He probably attended the church in Brimfield, as that town was incorporated December 24, 1731, having been granted to petitioners, and settled by persons from Springfield, in the year 1701. It therefore undoubtedly possessed such religious privileges before Mr. King entered upon his solitary forest home in this place. The spot where the rude log house was first erected by him cannot now be precisely determined. It was somewhere on the plain where the "Depot-village" now stands. Tradition says that this pioneer family spent the first night of their sojourn here at the spring on the hill side, near the old grave-yard, where their dust now slumbers. Some apple trees are said to have sprung up near by from seed dropped by them from the fruit they were eating.

Several of Mr. King's sons, of whom he had eight, and three daughters, settled in the immediate vicinity of their father, along the north bank of the Quaboag, or Chicopee river. From them not only the neighborhood where they lived received its name of the "King's row," but the whole township is often called "Kingsfield," but more

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\* See Appendix F.





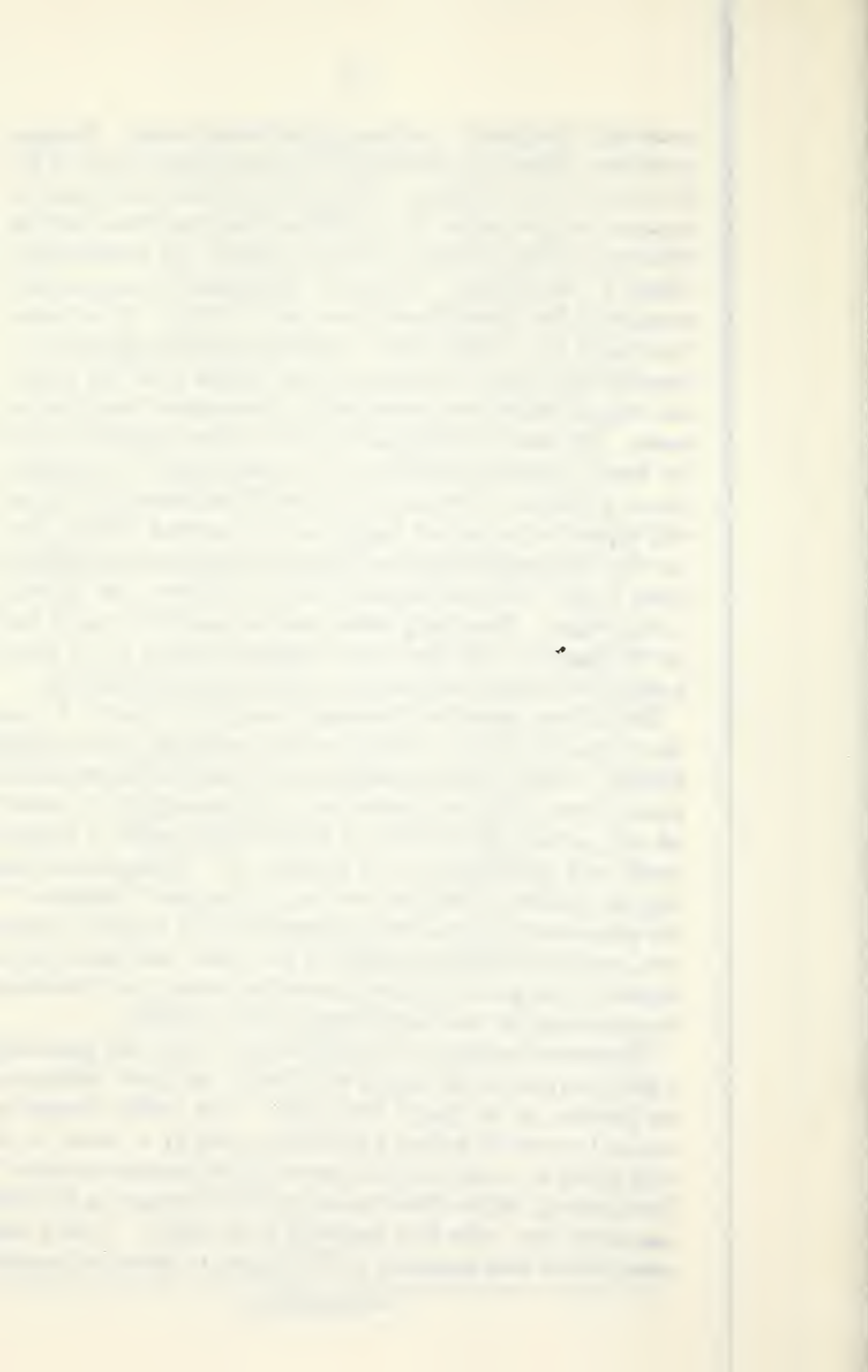
commonly "Kingstown," in the county and colony records. The more usual name, however, in these and in the town records, is the "Elbow-tract," or the "Elbows;" a designation doubtless derived from the angles made by the union of the Swift and the Ware rivers with the Chicopee, at whose junction, as the name implies, the manufacturing village of "Three-Rivers" is situated. This part of the town was first occupied by Mr. James Shearer, who died in 1745. It was sometimes called the "Dark-Corner," because prior to its occupancy as a manufacturing place, there were but three families in all that region, and most of the land was covered with a dense mass of the primitive forest. The town was designated by these various appellations, until the name it now bears was given to it a century ago at its incorporation as a *District*. Previous to that time the inhabitants had repeatedly applied to the Colonial Legislature to be invested with the powers of an incorporated town, and had sent several persons, at different times, to the "Great and General Court," to advance their interests in this respect. These early efforts were not successful; and it was not till thirty-five years after its first settlement that an act of incorporation was secured, and even then with one essential limitation.

The bill was enacted on Thursday, January 23, 1752\*. It conferred upon the citizens of this place, then numbering about seventy families, "all the powers, privileges, and immunities that the inhabitants of towns within this province are, or by law ought to be, invested with, *saving only the choice of Representative*, which, it is represented, said inhabitants are not desirous of." Perhaps one reason why the residents of this town were not, at that time, "desirous of" the invaluable privilege of being represented in the Colonial Legislature, was the fact that the granting of this power was known to be contrary to the general policy of the mother country, and, therefore, they asked only for what they thought could be obtained.

HUTCHINSON mentions in his history that in 1757, five years after Palmer was raised to the dignity of a District, the Lieut. Governor of the Province, by the King's instructions, "was strictly charged to consent to no act for making a new town, *unless*, by a clause in it, *there should be a restraint of this power of sending representatives.*" Thus jealously did the British crown guard its supremacy in the Colonies which were even then beginning to be restive. Such a veto seems to have been interposed by His Majesty, to prevent an increase

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\* See Appendix E.



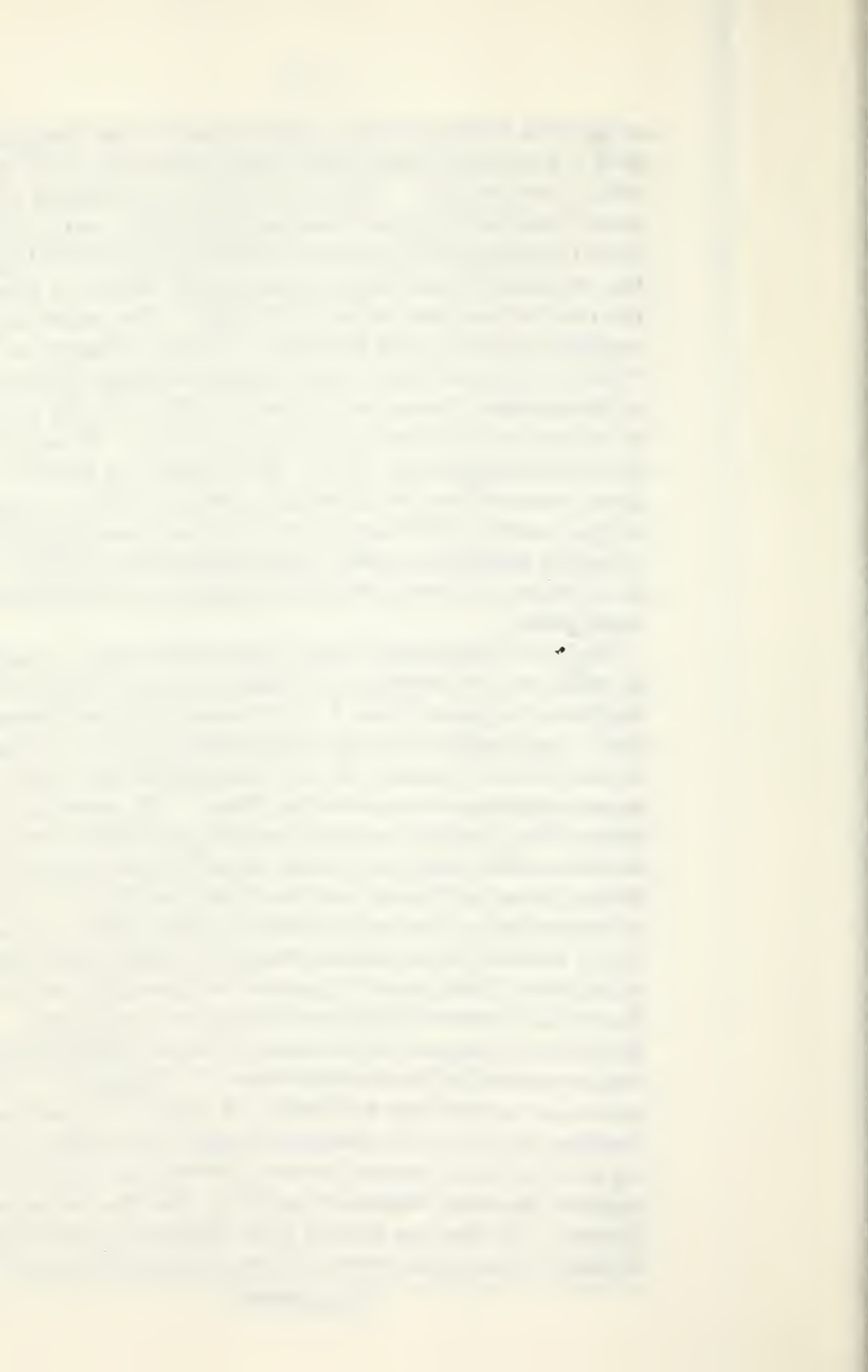


of opposition to his power in the popular branch of the Legislature, filled as it was with representatives from the towns which were generally against his policy. This town, therefore, was deprived of the power of sending a representative at its incorporation; and it did not attain this privilege till a general act was passed by the State Legislature, soon after the Revolution, empowering all districts to exercise this valuable prerogative of their civil rights.\* In a statute for the regulation of towns, passed March 23, 1786, is the following clause: "And be it further enacted, that all places incorporated by the name of districts before the first day of January, 1777, are hereby declared to be towns, to every intent and purpose whatever." It was by virtue of this enactment that Palmer, like Danvers and several other places, was raised from the subordinate rank of a district, incapable of representation in the General Court, to the more honorable position of equality with the other towns of the Commonwealth; entitled to all the privileges, and vested with all the rights, possessed by these sister municipalities.

The bill of incorporation having failed, inadvertently, to provide for calling the first meeting of the district, a special resolve of the Legislature was passed June 4, 1752, authorizing John Sherman, Esq., "upon application to him made for that purpose," to issue his warrant for such a meeting, where the inhabitants might "choose and appoint such town officers as the law directs." In accordance with this provision, a warrant was issued, and the first official meeting of the citizens of the newly incorporated district was held "at the public Meeting House, on Tuesday, the 30th day of June, 1752." The act of incorporation, as it passed the House of Representatives, contained also no *name* for the new district, though the inhabitants had petitioned for that of "Kingstown," by which it had previously been called. The probable reason why this natural request was not granted, was the fact that in the year 1726 a town in Plymouth county had already been incorporated by the the similar name of "Kingston." It was, however, no unusual thing for districts and towns to be thus nameless when the act of their incorporation passed the Legislature, leaving it for the Lieut. Governor, or some member of the Council, to be sponsor to the young offspring of the State. Such was the case with PALMER. The name was given by Lieut. Governor, Spencer Phipps, of Mass., in honor of his relative, THOMAS PALMER, Esq., who had

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\* See Appendix D.



recently died in Scotland.\* It is somewhat singular, and no less appropriate, that the town should bear the name of one who was a native of that land from which the greater part of the first settlers originally came.

But to return to the account of those who early established themselves here : — the first notice in the public records that persons were desirous to settle on these lands is a petition to the General Court, from Joseph Wright, John Kilburn and others, in Hampshire County, dated December, 1726. They asked for “a tract of land bounded westerly by Ware river and southerly by Chicopee river,” and proposed “to settle there soon.” The General Court appointed a committee to view the place ; but their report, if they made any, does not appear on record. The first date recorded on the town books occurs in specifying the birth of Sarah Frost, the daughter of Samuel and Deliverance Frost, who was born February, 1725. The first death on record is that of Moses King, son of John and Sarah King, who departed this life April 26, 1729. In recording the death of any one, the number of years, months and days, were very carefully given ; and sometimes even the hours and minutes !

In September, 1730, John King, Samuel Nevins and others, who were on these lands, petitioned for a grant of six miles square, and a committee was appointed to consider the matter and view the land, but nothing was done. In June, 1731, Joseph Wright, and others residing at “Elbows,” petitioned to have their lands confirmed to them ; and John King and others sent a similar petition. As was before stated, a company of the Scotch-Irish emigrants had begun to establish themselves here as early as 1727. They were encouraged to do this by grants or permits from the proprietors of Lambstown, (now Hardwick) who claimed an extensive tract of land in this region, by virtue of a purchase from the Indians, December 27, 1686, “for the sum of twenty pounds current money of New England.” The Colonial government, however, did not admit their title to the land, and accordingly fifty-six of the inhabitants, mostly Scotch-Irish, but some from Springfield and other New England towns, presented the following petition for a grant of this tract of land :—

“To His Excellency, Jonathan Belcher, Esq., Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over his Majesties Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New

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\* I am indebted to Rev. J. B. FELT, Secretary of the Congregational Library Association, for this interesting fact.



England, The Honorable His Majesties Council, and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, May 31, 1732.

"The petition of the subscribers dwelling and residing on a tract and parcel of land lying and situate between Springfield and Brookfield, Brimfield and the land called the Equivalent land and Cold Spring, Humbly Sheweth:—

"That they are sensible the said land belongs to the said Province, yet the reason why your petitioners entered on the said land was as follows:—Some from the encouragement of Joshua Lamb, Esq., and Company, that the said land belonged to them; and that they would give to such of your petitioners as entered thereon under them a good right and title to such a part thereof as they respectively contracted for. Yet notwithstanding your petitioners are now sensible that the said Lamb & Co. have no right to the said land, and that the same will prove greatly to your petitioners damage—that is to such as hold under them, unless relieved by your Excellency and Honors;—and that others of your petitioners entered on from necessity, not having wherewith of their own to provide. Yet nevertheless your petitioners are duly sensible that they deserve your discountenance. But confiding in the reasons offered, they humbly request your compassionate consideration, that they may be put under such regulation as may have a tendency to promote the flourishing of religion, &c.

"Therefore your petitioners most humbly pray, that your Excellency and Honors would take the premises into your wise consideration, and either grant them the said tract of land, or put them under such restrictions and regulations as in your consummate wisdom shall be thought most reasonable; and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

James Dorchester,	John Harvey,	Joseph Brooks,	Joseph Wright, jr.,
Joseph Wright,	John Bemon,	Robert Nevins,	Samuel Brooks,
Bernard McNitt,	Duncan Quintin,	Humphrey Gardner,	Robert Dunlap,
Daniel Fuller,	Isaac Magoon,	Nicholas Blancher,	Benjamin Parsons,
Andrew Mackie,	Isaac Magoon, jr.,	William Crawford,	James Lamberton, jr.,
James Shearer,	Micah Tousley,	Samuel Nevins,	Timothy McElwean,
James Stephens,	Elijah Vose,	John Gerish,	William Sloan,
Daniel Killam,	Elisha Hall,	Samuel Shaw,	Thomas Hill,
David Spear,	Alexander Tackels,	Andrew Rutherford,	James McElwean,
Thomas Little,	Robert Farrell,	Daniel Parsons,	Matthew Brown,
Samuel Doolittle,	Joseph Fleming,	James M'Clenathan,	Patrick Smith,
James Brakenridge,	Aaron Nelson,	James Lamberton,	John Brown,
Robert Harper,	John Henderson,	Thos. M'Clenathan,	Aaron Parsons,
William Shaw,	David Nevins,	Robert Thompson,	Andrew Farrand.

"In the House of Representatives, Nov. 24, 1732. In answer to this petition, Voted, that Col. John Alden, of Duxbury, and Mr. Samuel Bradford, of Plympton, with such others as the Honorable Board shall appoint, be a Committee to repair to the land petitioned for, carefully to view the situation and circumstances thereof, as well as those of the petitioners; and also the quantity and quality of the said land; and to report their opinion at the next May session, what may be proper for the Court to do thereon, and that the petition be referred accordingly. Sent up for concurrence.

J. QUINCY, Speaker.

"In Council, Nov. 27, 1732. Read and concurred. Ebenezer Burrill, Esq., of Lynn, joined in the affair.

J. WILLARD, Secretary.

"Consented to, J. BELOHER."

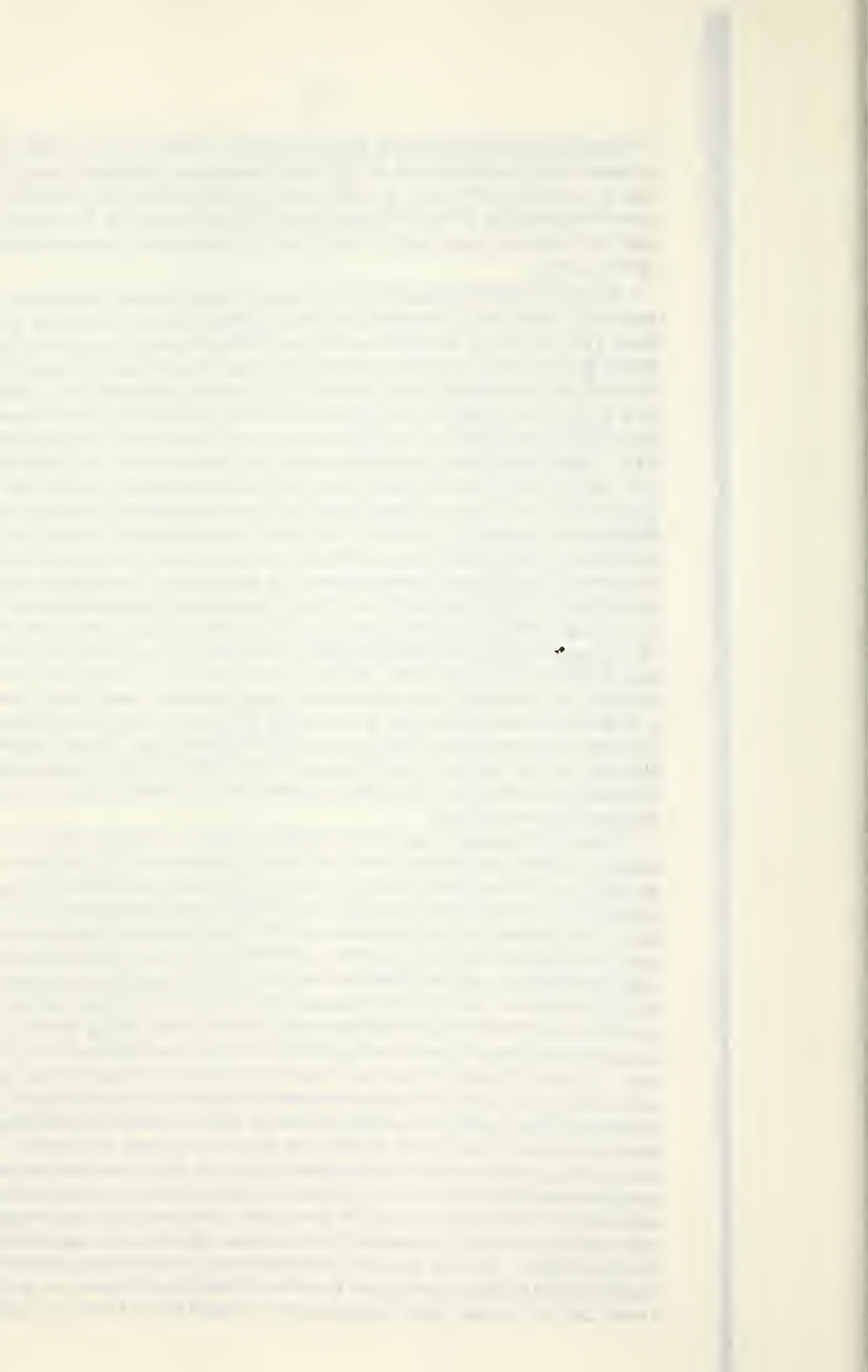




"The Committee appointed by the General Court at their session in Nov. last, to repair to the land petitioned for by James Dorchester and sundry others, having, in pursuance of the vote of said Court, repaired to said lands, and carefully viewed the condition of the inhabitants thereof, as well as that of the petitioners, and also the quantity and quality of said lands, do Report our opinion thereon, as follows, viz :—

"We find the land petitioned for to be a tract of land commonly called the 'Elbow tract,' lying near Springfield and the Equivalent Lands, containing 17,014 acres, (viz. contents of five miles square, and 1,014 acres over,) exclusive of particular grants taken up and laid out within the same, bounded and included within the lines and boundaries of the adjacent land as hereafter laid down, viz :—Easterly in part upon the west line of Brookfield township; from the North-west corner the said line runs South two deg. West to the river, called Quaboag *alias* Chicopee river; thence bounding on Brimfield township, as the said river runs, Easterly in part, and Southerly, and in part Westerly so far down said river, as to where the South end line of a tract of Equivalent land, called Cold-Spring township, [now Belchertown,] crosses or skirts the said river; then bounding Northerly on the said line, as it keeps East by the needle of the surveying instrument, to the South-east corner of said tract or township, which is the mouth of Swift River; thence bounding Westerly in part on the said tract or township of Equivalent land as the river runs, to where the South line of another tract of Equivalent land, [now Ware] containing 10,000 acres belonging to John Read, Esq., strikes up or runs from said river; thence bounding Northerly upon said line as it runs East and by North to the South-east corner of said tract, being a heap of stones by the root of a great red oak tree, fallen close by one on the West side of a run of water, about eighteen rods Southerly of the river, called the Ware River; thence bounding Westerly on the East line of said tract, as it runs North by the needle, until an East line there will strike the North-east corner tree of Brookfield, as by a plan presented herewith appears.

"We find the greatest part of said land to be a Pine land, high hills and low vallies; the hills very poor and mean, the vallies pretty good. We also find that the said tract of land lies in a broken form, and is much discommoded by farms claimed by particular grants from this Court, which have taken up the best of the land. We also find that the circumstances of the petitioners and settlers are difficult and much intricated and perplexed; some of them having entered and settled without regulation, and have interfered and encroached upon other men's pitches and improvements; and in many instances, two several settlers claim one and the same spot, under different pleas and pretences of right; some having lots laid out, some partly laid out, and others only pitched, interfering one with another as aforesaid. We would further inform this honorable court that we have taken great pains and care to inspect and inquire into every particular instance relating to the said tract of land, and find it needful, to prevent further charge and difficulty, to report particularly, viz :—That we find that there are entered, and settled, and about settling, on the said tract of land, the number of eighty persons, the most whereof are families who have built houses, and made considerable improvements, and are now, and have constantly, for more than three years past, been supplied with a minister to preach the word of God unto them, who has been supported by a free contribution. We also find that about forty-eight of the above number were introduced and led on, or encouraged to settle and make improvements, by Joshua Lamb, Esq., & Co., and their Committee, who claimed the said tract of land by





virtue of an Indian purchase; and the most of the number had actual contracts from them for certain parcels thereof, and had received deeds of conveyance, and orders from them for laying out of their lots, and have had the most of them laid out accordingly. We are, therefore, humbly of the opinion that the several persons and families hereafter named, that were so admitted and settled under and by the said claimers, have their several and respective lots, hereafter mentioned, ratified and confirmed to them, their heirs and assigns, in such proportions and under such restrictions and limitations and considerations as follows and are hereafter mentioned."

Specific grants to forty-four different persons were then made, mostly of 100 acres each, and they alone were constituted Proprietors or Grantees, with power to take and divide among themselves all lands within the limits of the town, not otherwise appropriated. One of the conditions of this adjustment of their affairs was, "that such of the aforesaid persons or grantees, as are non-residents, and their lots not settled, shall forthwith settle them by their own persons, or by *such credible wholesome inhabitants* as shall be accepted by the major part of the resident settlers." Another of the terms was, that they should "lay out in some suitable and convenient places, one lot, not less than one hundred acres, to be to and for the first settled and ordained minister; and, also, two other lots, of the same contents, one for the use of the ministry, and the other for a school." Thus early was provision made for education and religion.

The Committee reported further:—"We find that the following named persons, to the number of thirty-one, having presumed to enter upon the Province land, in the said tract, without any leave or order from this Court, or under any pretence of mistake, or admission from the aforesaid claimers; yet, they having, most of them, made considerable improvement, and expended the chief of their small substance, and having paid their proportion to the support of the ministry among them; that to remove them off would reduce them to extreme poverty. We are, therefore, humbly of the opinion that it may not be inconsistent with the honor of the Province, and yet a sufficient discountenance to such presumptuous settlements, if there be granted to each of them a single lot, including their improvements, upon such conditions as are hereafter mentioned."

A description of the grants to these persons then follows, and also the conditions applicable to all the settlers. These were "that all and each of the above-named persons or grantees, both first and last mentioned, (excepting the Rev. Mr. JOHN HARVEY,\*) do pay into

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\* The first settled minister of the town. See Appendix A.

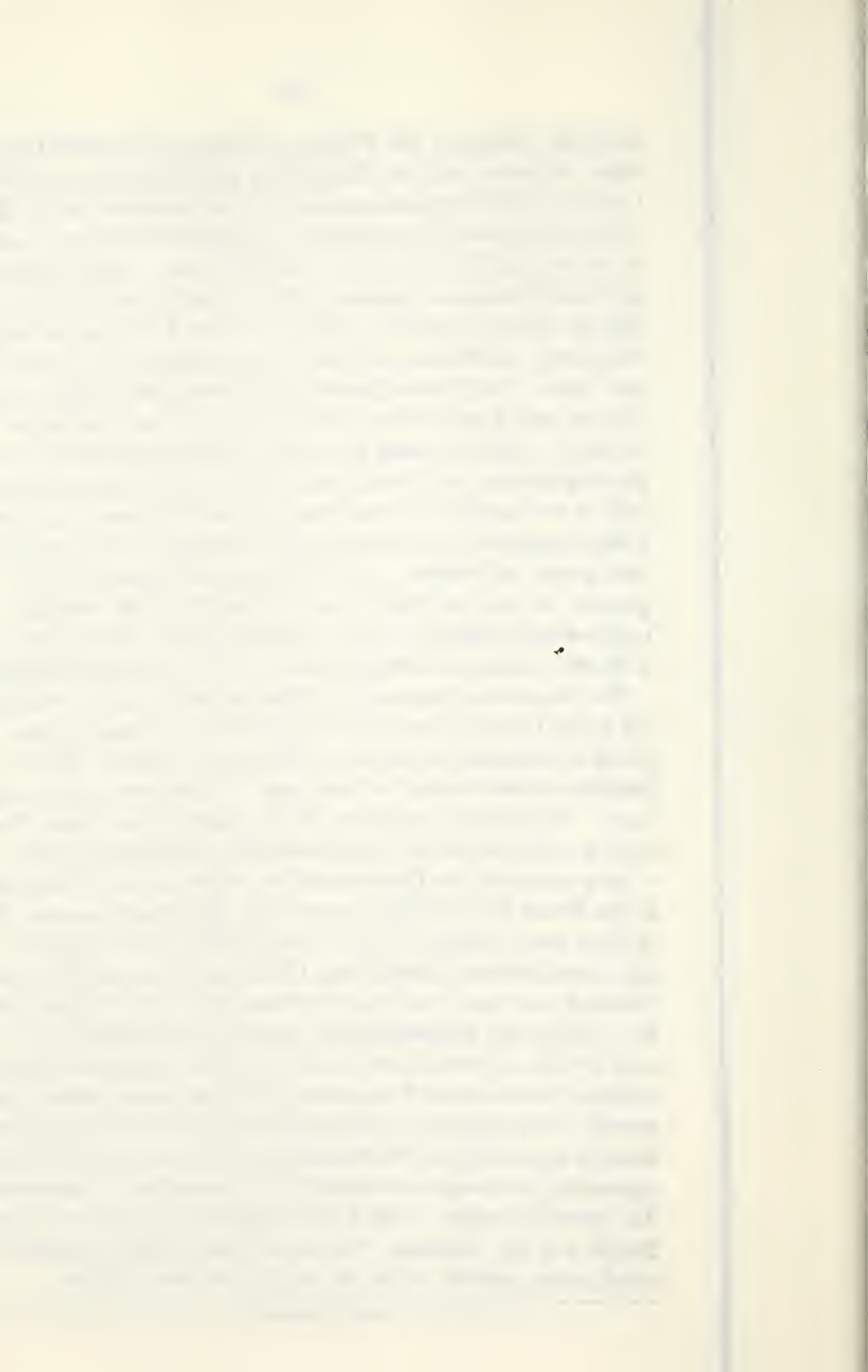


the public treasury of this Province, the sum of five hundred pounds within two years ; as, also, forthwith to pay the further sum of £67, 11s and 9p, the charge and expense of this Committee on the affair ; each man or grantee his equal part or proportion of said sums, according to the quantity of his grant or first allotment. And if any of the aforementioned persons or grantees, either first or last mentioned, do not fulfil the aforesaid conditions, within the term of time herein limited, their lots to be forfeited, and other ways disposed of as this Court shall order. And that all public charges arising for the future (until they be settled and invested with the powers and privileges of a township,) shall be raised upon their several lots, according to the quantity of acres ; and that all such of the aforesaid persons, or grantees, as are entitled to draw after-rights and divisions, shall pay a double proportion to all such charges, according to the quantity of their grants or first lots. And that they, the aforesaid settlers and grantees, do erect and build a suitable house for public worship\*, and settle a minister within two years ; and that they be allowed to bring in a Bill for erecting and setting themselves off a township accordingly."

This Report was presented by Ebenezer Burrill, Esq., and adopted by the General Court, June 21st, 1733. It seems to have adjusted all difficulties in the case, and from this time the affairs of the youthful settlement seem to have gone "on the even tenor of their way." The following record on the Proprietor's book shows the esteem in which the labors of this Committee were regarded by them :— "At a meeting of the Proprietors of the common and undivided lands in the Elbow Tract, legally convened by adjournment, on the third of June, being Monday, 1735,—Voted, That there be granted and laid out to Ebenezer Burrill, Esq., Col. John Alden, and Mr. Samuel Bradford, who were the Honorable Committee of the General Court for viewing and determining the grants of this Elbow Tract,—to each of them an hundred acre lot, in any of the common land that was added to the tract since it was surveyed by the former claimers, as a grateful acknowledgment of their great and good service to the settlement, in dispatching the affairs thereof by a full and particular Report, superseding the charge and difficulty of a Committee of regulation." The record also exists of the land surveyed and laid out to Esquire Burrill and Mr. Bradford, "in the north-end addition, so called," which is now probably within the limits of the town of Ware.

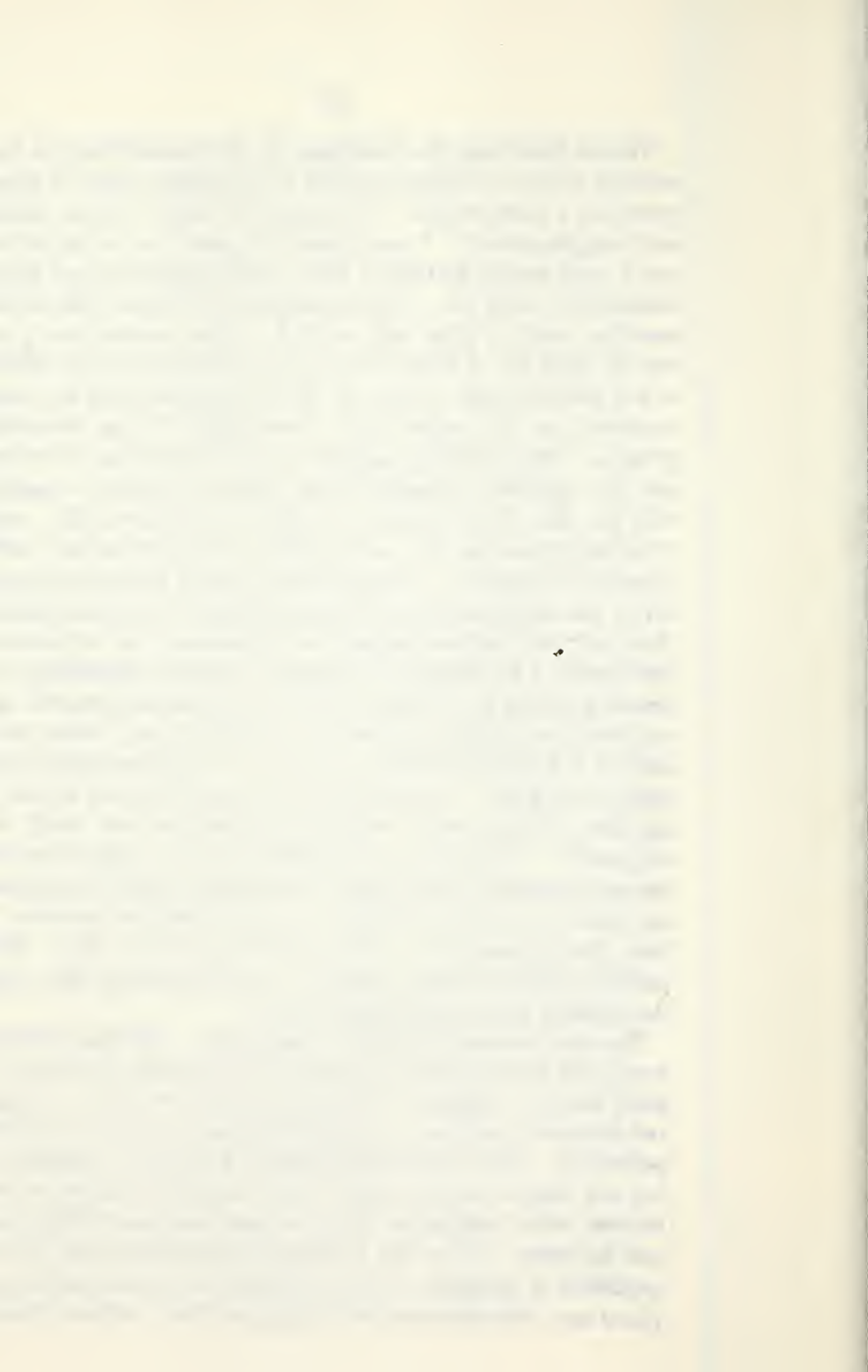
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\* See Appendix B.



The tax levied upon the inhabitants by the General Court, in accordance with the conditions specified in the Report, seems to have pressed as a heavy burden, "too heavy to be borne" by the feeble and struggling colony. It may appear as a small sum to us, but it was a great amount for them to raise, amid the privations and destitutions of that early time. The currency was in Province bills, which were then worth in silver only one-third of their nominal value; so that the whole tax of £567, 11s, 9p, was equal only to about \$630, or less than four cents an acre for the 17,014 acres which the town contained; yet the people found it very difficult to pay even this pittance. They accordingly applied to the General Court for relief, and also appointed a Committee from their own number, to consult with the Hon. John Stoddard and Ebenezer Pomeroy, Esq., and "lay before them the state and condition of this settlement," with respect to this matter. The payment was delayed from time to time, till at last execution from the Province Treasurer was issued against them, and their collectors exposed to imprisonment for not meeting the demand of the General Government. The town immediately addressed a petition to the Court, in Sept. 1743, ten years after the tax was levied, setting forth the claims of "this little, poor, infant plantation," to farther forbearance and mercy. They represented themselves as being but "a poor people, on a small, mean tract of land," and that their taxes were "very hard, and greivous, and wholly insupportable." In answer to this petition it was "ordered that the warrant mentioned be so far stayed as that they be obliged to pay only one-quarter part thereof forthwith, and the other three-quarters in three equal payments, viz: in the years 1744, '45, and '46." This probably settled the matter, and out of their deep poverty they paid the stipulated price of their humble homes.

The town increased but slowly in population. The land, covered mostly with primeval forests, presented few attractions to any save a hardy and persevering race of men, who could earn, from a rugged and somewhat sterile soil, a scanty subsistence only by severe and patient toil. Their early efforts and labors, like those of emigrants to our now distant western borders, were necessarily directed to the toilsome work of clearing the heavy timbered lands, and building their rude log-houses. There was little opportunity afforded them for the acquisition of property. Their dependence was almost exclusively placed upon what their own hands might gain from a soil never famed



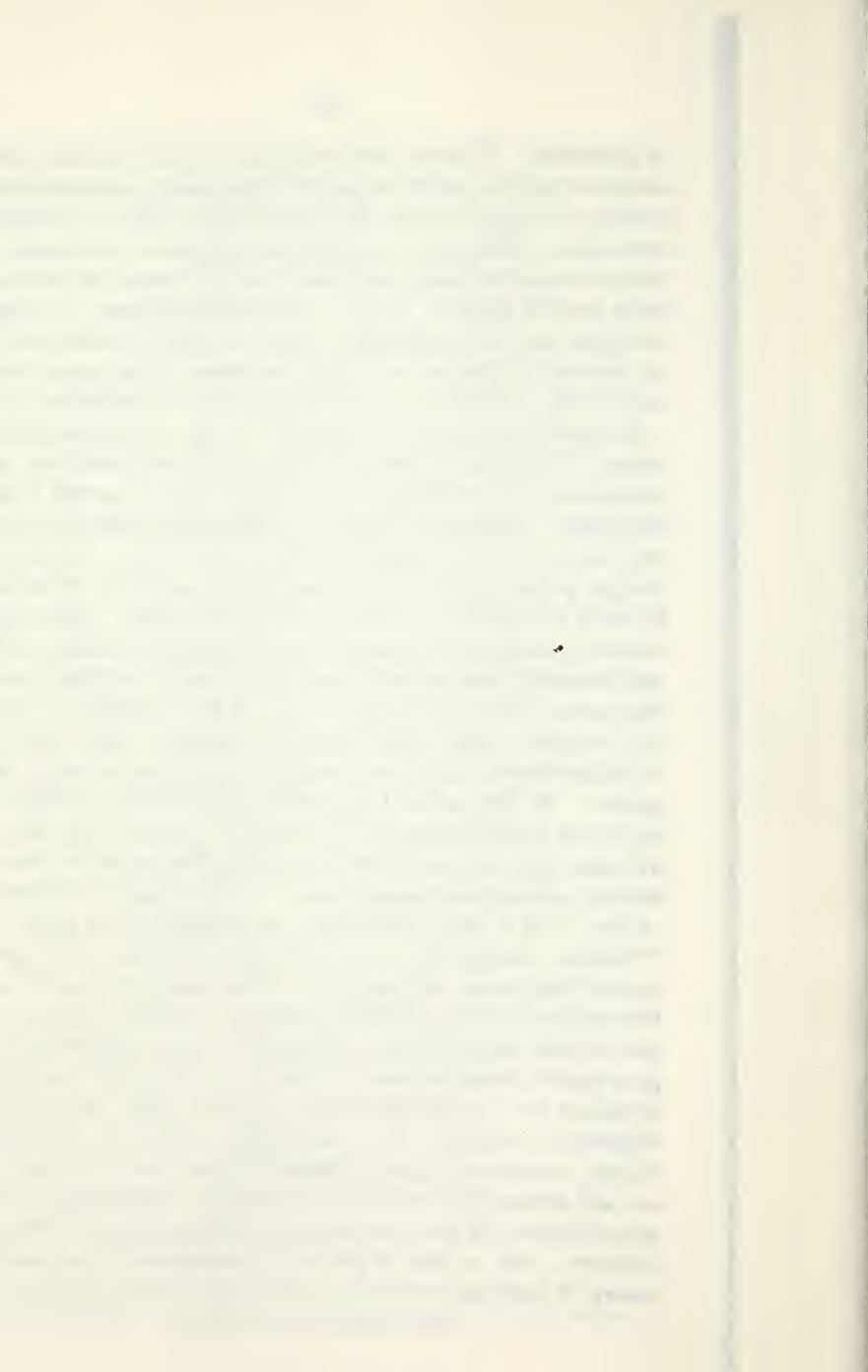


for its fertility. Whatever they could raise, beyond what their own necessities required, had to be carried by long and expensive journies to Boston, in order that they might procure other articles of domestic consumption. Their pork, and grain, and potatoes,—the culture of this latter vegetable being introduced into this country by the emigrants from the north of Ireland,—were there exchanged for sugar, and spices, and other commodities, which only the city could furnish, not forgetting a little *tea*!—for the good dames of that period were undoubtedly as fond of a social chat, and a bit of scandal too, over “the cups that cheer but not inebriate,” as are their more modern sisters. The women of the Scotch-Irish made much finer linen and thread than our New England women, which they often sold in the river towns. Nothing was known here about the foot-wheel for spinning flax, until these emigrants came to this country. It may be thought, perhaps, by the cynical that these were articles of luxury, for which the people of that day had no great necessity. They were elements, however, of refinement; for they manifested a taste which would naturally seek to gratify itself in other ways, and which would thus gradually lead to the improvement of their condition in many other respects. Still a spirit of patriotic prudence, and, if need be, of self-sacrifice was early and strongly cherished by our worthy progenitors. At the annual town meeting, held March 15, 1768, an article had been introduced into the warrant “to see if this District will agree upon, and come into some effectual measures to promote industry, economy and manufactures.” “Whereupon,” it is recorded that, “in a very full meeting, the following votes passed:—“Whereas, the excessive use of foreign superfluities, is one great cause of the present distressed state of this country in general, and the happiness of the communities depends on industry, economy and good morals; and this District, taking into serious consideration the great decay of trade, the scarcity of money, the heavy debt contracted in the last war,\* which still remains upon the people, and the great difficulties to which, by these means, they are reduced: Therefore, Voted, *unanimously*, that this District will use their utmost endeavors, and enforce their endeavors by examples, in suppressing extravagance, idleness and vice, and promoting industry, economy and good manners. And, in order to prevent the unnecessary exportation of money, of which the continent has of late been so much drained, it is

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\* The old French War, so called.



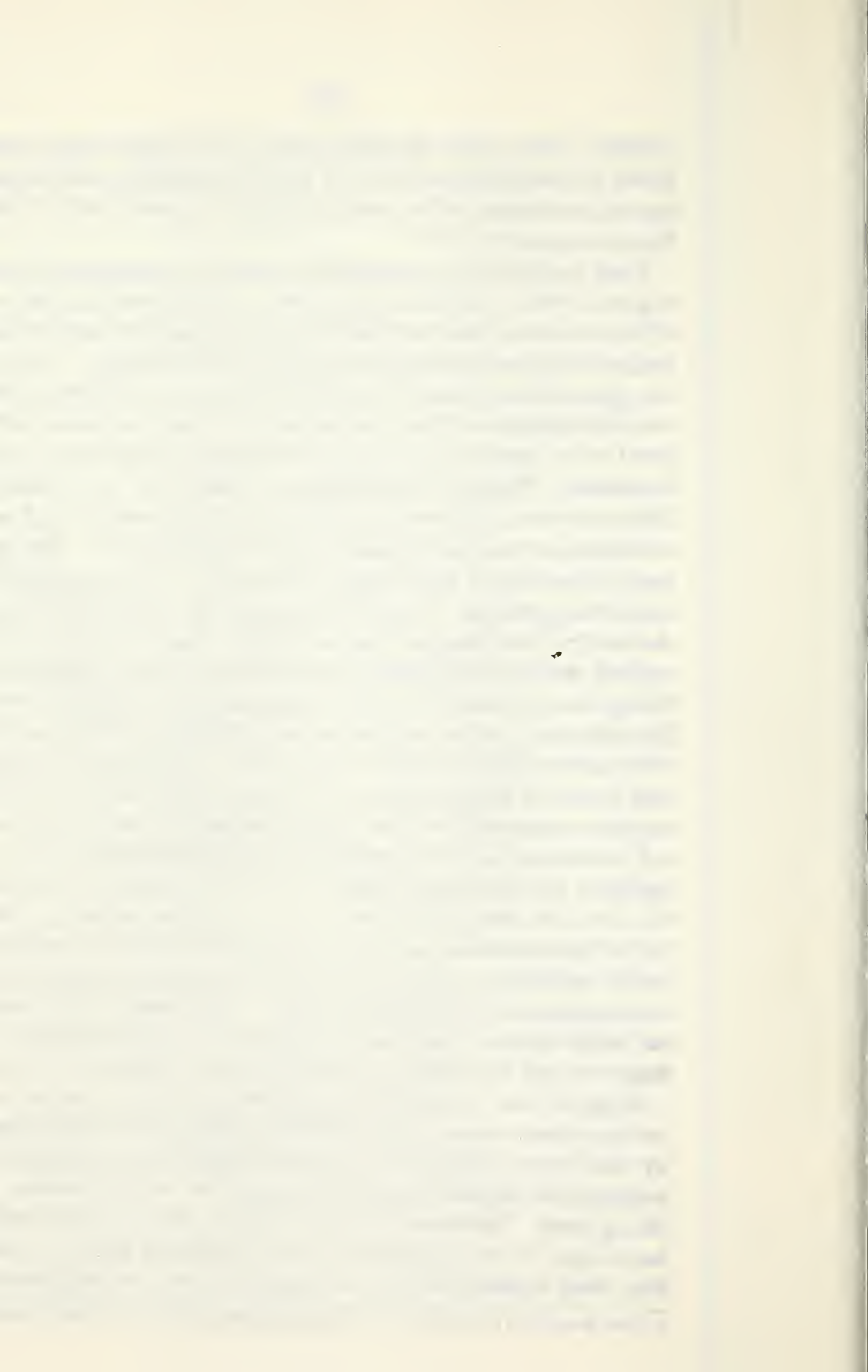


therefore, VOTED, that this District will, by all prudent means, endeavor to discountenance the use of foreign superfluities, and encourage the manufactures of the whole continent in general, and of this Province in particular."\*

These resolutions were worthy of those who were cotemporaries and co-patriots with "the Boston tea party." It was such a spirit, so rife even in the retired rural districts, which prepared the way for the long and arduous, but triumphant struggle of the Revolution. It does not appear, from any record or tradition that has come within my reach, that the inhabitants of this town, in its earlier days, were ever subjected to the inroads and ravages of the Indians, by whom they were surrounded. Traces of the aborigines are still found in our fields. Their rude stone implements of husbandry, domestic utensils, and arrow-heads, are occasionally turned up by the plough-share. This appears to have been a favorite region with them. It was their fishing and hunting grounds. From the Quaboag ponds in Brookfield, along the valley of the Chicopee river, to where it empties into the Connecticut, the free, hardy, stalwart sons of the forest roved at pleasure. Though this was never the scene of any general and sanguinary conflict with them, yet the early settlers were obliged to be ever on the alert against a sudden surprise or open attack. Strong guard houses were erected in different parts of the town, to which for a time the *men* were accustomed to resort at night, leaving their families exposed and defenceless; for it was generally found to be the aim of the savage foe to cut off the male portion of the inhabitants, well knowing that from them they had the most to fear. It was customary, also, for the first settlers here, as was the case in other parts of our exposed frontier settlements, to go into the fields with a gun in one hand, and the implements of husbandry in the other. The females left at home had loaded fire-arms ready, and ready arms to use them, in defence of themselves and their little ones; and they kept a constant look out, "all eye, all ear," in dreaded expectation of the foe. On one occasion an heroic matron,† while left alone at night with her little family, her husband having gone to the guard house, was startled by the howling of the frightened dogs who attempted to burst in the door of the log house. She feared that this boded an attack from the ruthless savage, but was greatly relieved when three loud yells of a panther, thrice repeated, told the real character of her untimely visitor.

\* Town Records, Vol. I, p. 351.

† The grandmother of Capt. Timothy Ferrell.



"Oh, mister," said she, "I am glad to hear that it is *only you!*" The present generation of *ladies*, whose hands seldom touch any thing more alarming than the needle, or the keys of a piano, and who faint almost at the smell of gunpowder, would be ill-suited for such times and scenes as tried the resolution and fortitude of the dames of yore.

As it is a matter of interest to know the progressive growth of any place, I have endeavored to collect a few such facts as would clearly show the progress of this town in population and wealth. The first movement for a census in Massachusetts,—except one ordered in 1754, to ascertain the number of negroes,—which is found on our legislative records, was begun in 1763, while this Province was still a colony of the British government. The requisition was made by Parliament, and was regarded with anxious jealousy by our fathers, as another plan for the imposition of taxes on our Province, and the infringement of their charter rights. Being a novelty in political requisitions, it was naturally viewed with great suspicion. The first proposal of the Governor, Sir Phillip Francis, in 1763, did not receive from the Colonial Legislature that prompt attention which he wished. He again addressed the legislative body on the subject, and an order was passed "that the selectmen of each town and district, in this Province, to be chosen for the year 1764, do, as soon as conveniently may be, take an exact account of the number of dwelling houses, families and people in their respective towns and districts, including as well Indians civilized, negroes and mulattoes, as white people, and females as well as males." Thus sanctioned, the project seemed as though it would be successful. But as the heart of the people was not in it, many refused to comply with its requisitions. No doubt their disaffection to it was much increased by the tidings that Parliament had voted to tax the American Colonies. Nor was the acerbity of their feelings toward it at all *sweetened* by the "Sugar Act," which restricted their commerce with the West Indies. After waiting over a year with his patience much tried, and his fear not small lest the British authorities would look on him as inefficient, the Chief Magistrate desired that the stronger confirmations of a formal law with suitable penalties annexed, might be superadded. In accordance with this, an act was passed March 1, 1765, that compelled the selectmen of the various towns and districts to see that the required census was taken, under a penalty of £50 for refusal or neglect of this duty. Any individual who should refuse to give a proper and true list, when



required by the selectmen, was fined forty shillings. Thus the first most particular census of our Commonwealth was introduced and carried forward, in one of the stormiest periods of our political history. From this it appeared that the town of Palmer had in the year 1765, a little less than 50 years after its settlement, 74 houses, 88 families, 123 males and 110 females under 16 years of age; 133 males and 140 females above 16,—making in all 506 inhabitants.\* According to the negro census of 1755, there was but one colored person in this town, and he a *slave*! owned by William Scott.

At the annual meeting held March 3, 1761, the citizens appointed a Committee of five “to petition His Excellency, the Governor, that some person be commissioned for a Justice of the Peace in this town.” The record goes on to say,—“It was disputed whether it would be agreeable to His Excellency, the Governor, that we should nominate such a person as we thought best qualified for such a commission, and most likely to serve the public in the exercise of it; and it was unanimously thought that our nominating such a person would be no way disagreeable to him. Then, VOTED, the following instructions to the above said Committee, viz:—That we, after due consideration, and deliberately debating the affair, do find that Mr. William Scott, Jr., is a person most likely to be of public service to this Society in the commission of the peace; and we do expect you will, as soon as you have opportunity, make application to His Excellency, the Governor, in behalf of this town, that a commission of the peace might be procured for Mr. William Scott, Jr., he being a person of considerable knowledge in the law, and also of a very good character. We, therefore, put confidence in you, that you will take every proper method you can think, or imagine necessary, and so proceed from time to time, till you have obtained the same.” Such action, by the concurrent voice of the whole town, shows the importance they attached to the office, and the confidence they had in the man. The title, of itself, *then* conferred distinction. It was a warrant of personal merit;

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\* By the census of 1776, at the opening of the Revolution, there were 727 inhabitants in this town.

In	Population, 809	Valuation, \$5,134 82
1790	“ 1,389	“ 5,749 94
“ 1810	“ 1,114	“ 6,957 70
“ 1820	“ 1,197	“ 9,092 77
“ 1830	“ 1,237	“ 256,428 06
“ 1840	“ 2,139	“ 695,519 00
“ 1850	“ 3,974	“ 1,298,435 67



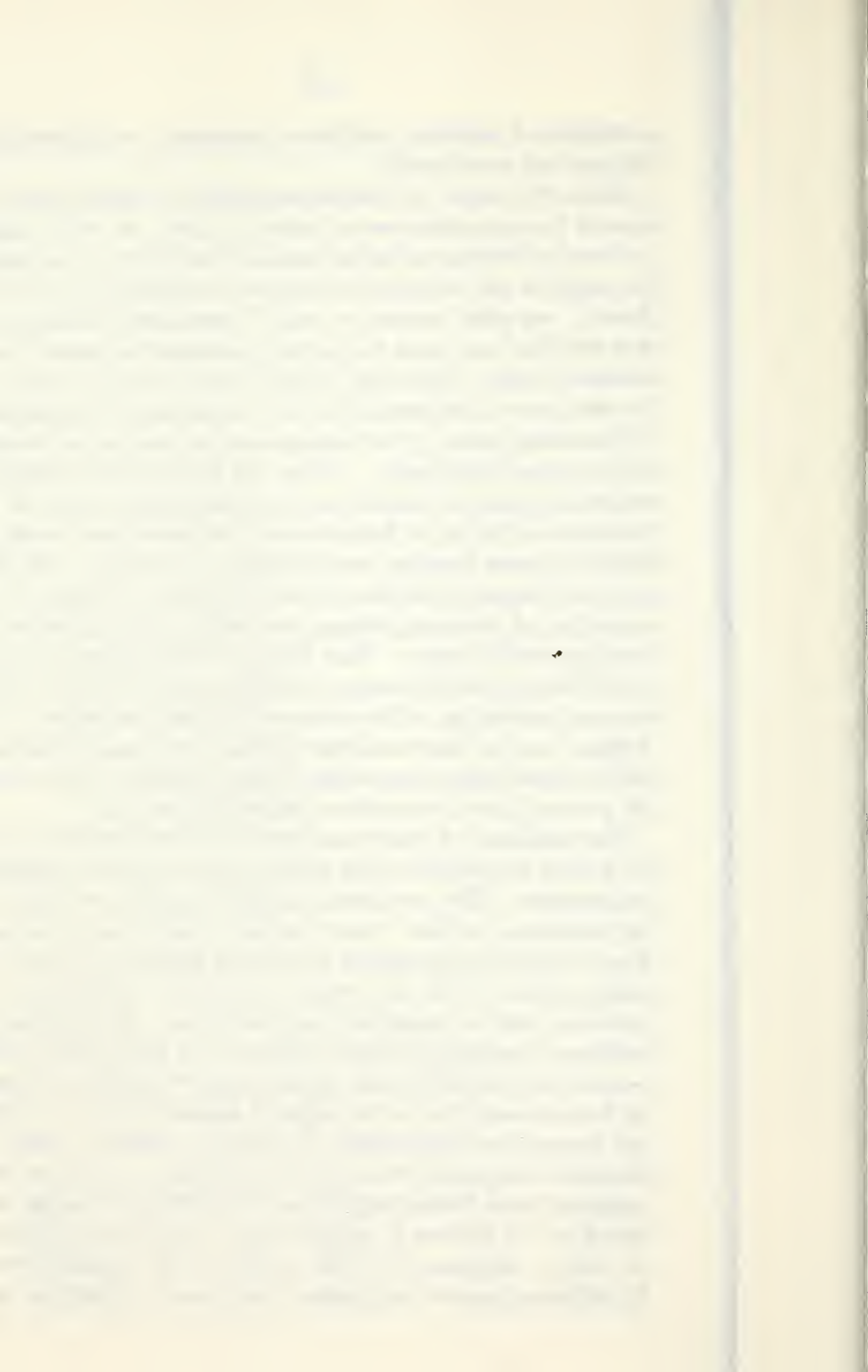




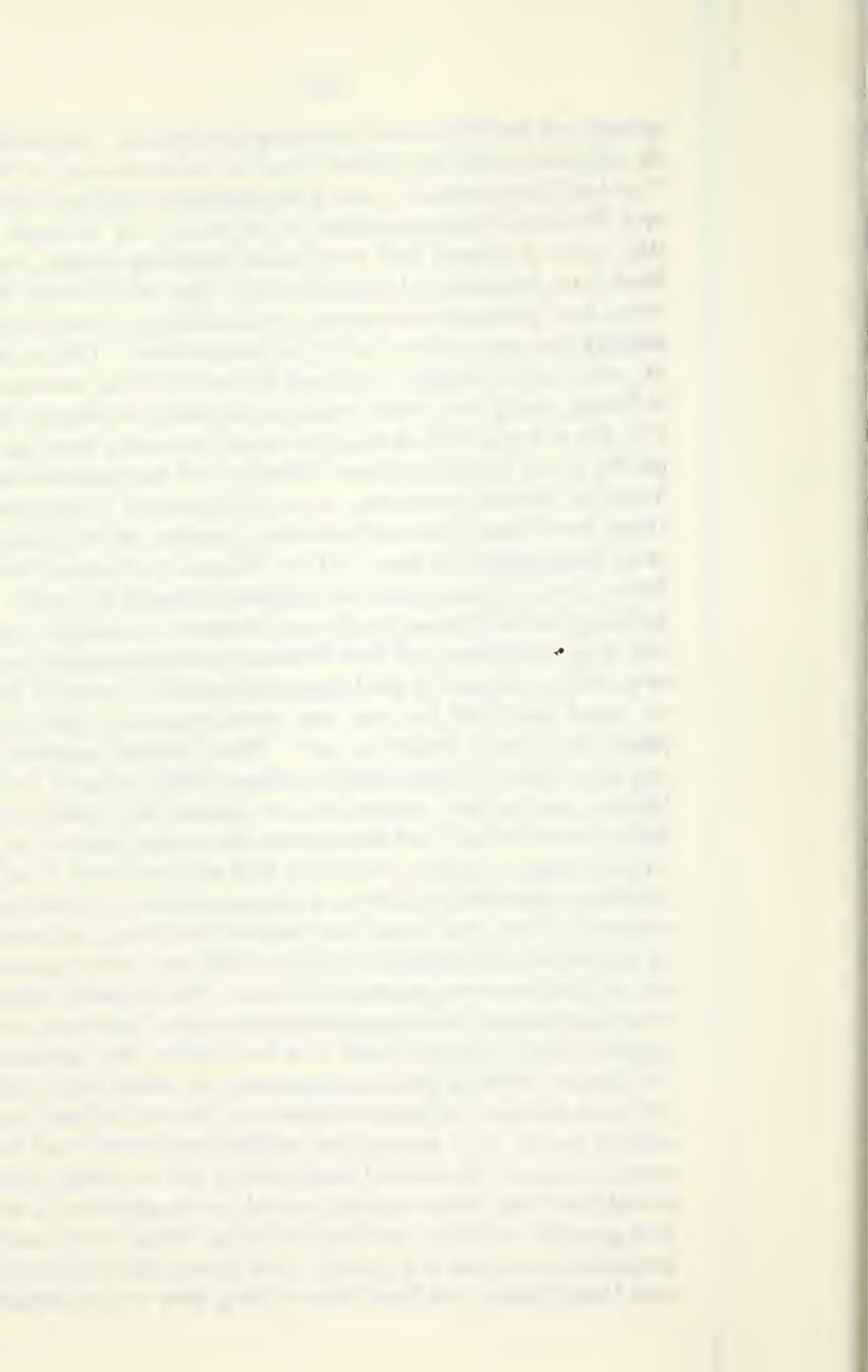
a certificate of undoubted excellence of character ; an evidence of intellectual and moral worth !

Many other matters of local interest might be alluded to, but the lapse of time admonishes me to hasten to a close. It would require a volume, rather than the limited compass of an address, to narrate all that might be said with profit and interest, of the history of the town. There is one point, however, to which I must refer, reflecting as it does such high honor upon the patriotic qualities of our fathers in revolutionary times. The records of this town, like those of nearly all the other towns of the State at that day, contain many honorable relics of the sterling virtues of our ancestors, and of their zealous devotion to the cause of civil liberty. "From the first practical attempt to separate the power of taxation and the right of representation, to the termination of the war of Independence, the various town records are filled with papers breathing an ardent spirit of patriotism. On their pages are eloquent vindications of the principles of civil liberty, able expositions of chartered privileges, and bold appeals against the encroachments of the crown. They bring to us the thoughts and words of the fathers of the Revolution as vividly as they rose on the minds, or came from the lips, of the authors of the heroic resolutions. The doings of each of these municipal republics form connected series of noble acts and exertions, spreading through many years, and evincing the pure and tested virtues of the patriots of former time."

The inhabitants of this town at the time of the Revolution, were not lacking in patriotism at this trying era of our national struggle for independence. They were ready to peril every thing but honor, for the preservation of their "most invaluable rights and privileges." They furnished their proportion of men and means for the war, and nobly performed their part toward securing that independence for which they made a prompt and early declaration. By a singular coincidence, a meeting was held in Palmer on the 17th of June, 1776, —on the very day of the awful opening scene of the bloody drama of the Revolutionary War, on the heights of Bunker's Hill,—“to advise and instruct the Representative of this town, whether, should the Honorable Congress for the safety of the Colonies declare them independent of Great Britain, they, the said inhabitants, will engage *with their lives and fortunes* to support them in the measures, agreeable to, and in compliance with, the resolve of the General Court.” To the lasting honor of our patriotic forefathers, be it said, that they



unitedly and cordially entered into the spirit of the call. And while, all unknown to them, their fellow-citizens in the eastern part of this "good old Commonwealth," were pouring the leaden missiles of death upon the ranks of the hired minions of despotism; and in behalf of their native or adopted land, were bravely and freely shedding their blood in the first battle of America's Liberty: they, with a kindred devotion, were giving utterance to their patriotic feelings in words, whose sincerity they were ready to test by as patriotic deeds. It is recorded on the town books that, "at a very full meeting of the inhabitants of Palmer, legally met at the public meeting-house, on Monday, the 17th day of June, 1776, at one of the clock, the meeting being opened, Mr. Robert Ferrell was chosen Moderator, and then proceeded and Voted the following instructions to the Representative of this town, [Capt. David Spear], now at the General Assembly of this Colony, as the sentiments of this town:—That, Whereas, the Court of Great Britain hath, by sundry acts of Parliament, assumed the power of legislation for the Colonies in all cases whatsoever, without the consent of the inhabitants; and have, likewise, exerted the assumed power in raising a revenue in the Colonies without their consent, so that we cannot justly call that our own, which others may, when they please, take from us against our will: Hath, likewise, appointed a new set of officers to superintend the revenue, wholly unknown in the Charter, who, by their commissions, are invested with powers altogether unconstitutional, and destructive to the security which we have a right to enjoy; and fleets and armies hath been introduced, to support these unconstitutional officers in collecting these unconstitutional revenues: Hath, also, altered the Charter of this Colony, and thereby overthrown the Constitution, together with many other grievous acts of Parliament too grievous to be borne: The peaceable inhabitants being alarmed at such repeated inroads on the Constitution, and gigantic strides to despotic power over the Colonies, they petitioned the King for redress of grievances separately, but finding that to fail, petitioned jointly,—begging as children to a father to be heard and relieved, but all to no purpose, the petitions being treated with the utmost contempt: The united Colonies finding that no redress could be had from Great Britain, unitedly agreed to an opposition, in the most peaceable way they could contrive, being willing to try every peaceable measure that they possibly could invent, rather than break with Great Britain; but Great Britain, being bent on her favorite



scheme of enslaving the Colonies, declared them rebels and treated them as such : The Colonies being driven to a state of despair, for the last release from them, were obliged, by the law of self-preservation, to take up arms in their own defence, and meant to use them only as such ; but the dispute having arisen to so great a height that it is impossible for the Colonies ever to be joined with Great Britain again, with the least security and safety to themselves or posterity :—

“ We, therefore, the inhabitants of this town, do believe it absolutely necessary for the safety of the United Colonies, to be independent from Great Britain, and to declare themselves an independent and separate State, as we can see no alternative but inevitable ruin or independence. But as there is a General Congress of the United Colonies, composed of honorable, wise and good men, who sit at the head of affairs, consulting measures which will be most for the safety and prosperity of the whole, having the means of intelligence and information in their hands, we submit the whole affair to their wise consideration and determination ; and if they shall unite in a separation from Great Britain, *we do unanimously determine and declare that we will support them with our lives and fortunes !*

“ We do direct the Representative of this town to lay these votes before the Honorable General Assembly of this Colony, to enable them to communicate our sentiments to the Honorable Continental Congress.

(Signed)

ROBERT FERRELL, *Moderator.*

ROBERT HUNTER, *Clerk.*”

These resolutions of our patriotic fathers are worthy of all praise, and the liberty-loving spirit they breathe ought to be cherished by their posterity to the latest generation. They came from men who felt, from their past experience and that of their progenitors, that

“ ’Tis LIBERTY alone that gives the flower  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,  
And we are weeds without it ; all constraint,  
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
Is evil, and forms in them who suffer it  
A sordid mind, unfit to be the tenant  
Of man’s noble frame.”

This manly and explicit avowal of wrongs received, and bold assertion of rights denied, and fearless *Declaration of Independence*, as it might justly be called, was a fitting prelude, on the part of our heroic citizens, to that world-renowned instrument whose thrilling words, but





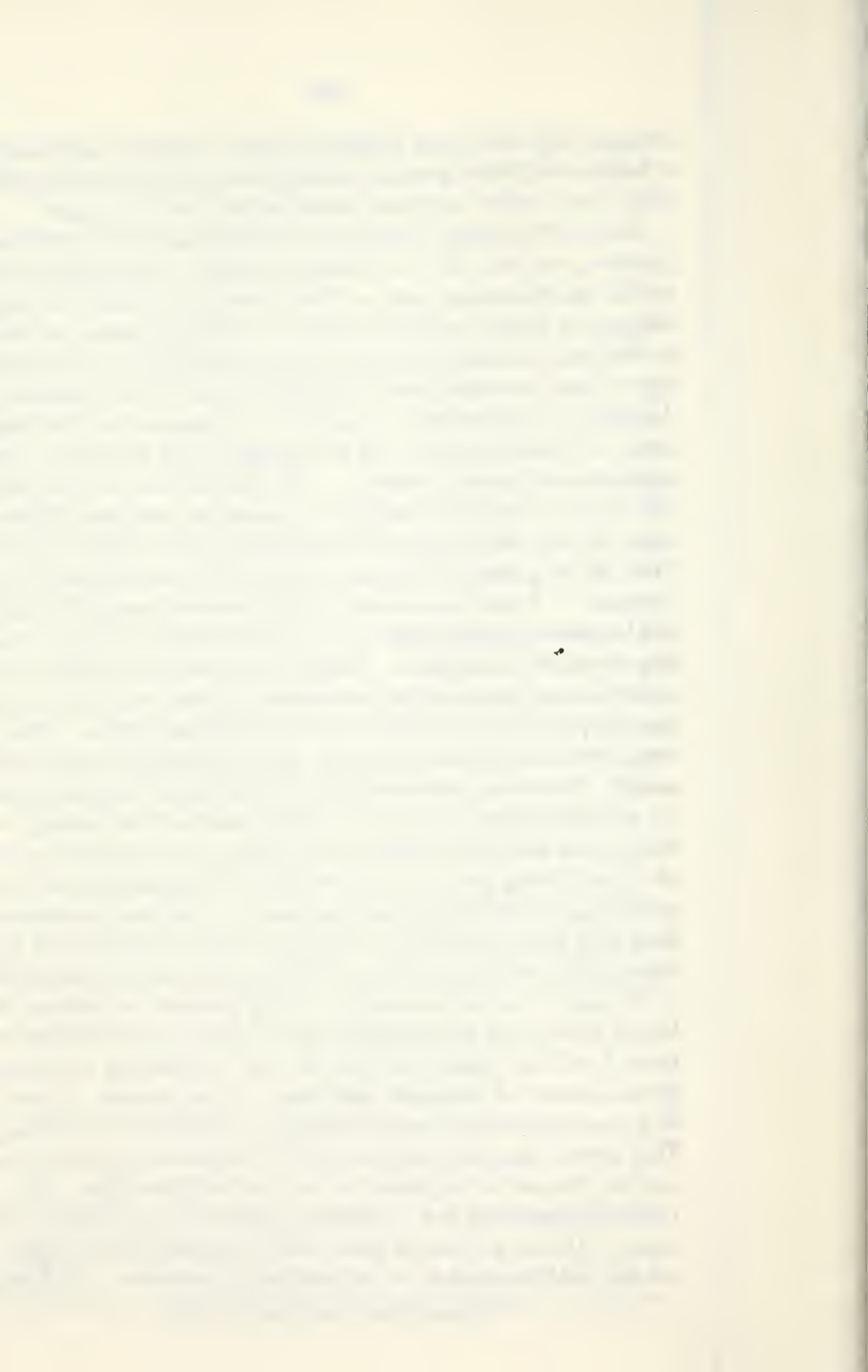
seventeen days later, rang through the land ; and whose anniversary is hailed with jubilant greetings through the entire length and breadth of the freest, noblest, mightiest nation that the sun shines upon !

BANCROFT\* in giving a description of the disfranchised Scotch-Presbyterians, and their share in colonizing America, and preparing the way for the Revolution, says :—" Their training in Ireland had kept the spirit of Liberty, and the readiness to resist government, as fresh in their hearts as though they had just been listening to the preachings of Knox, or musing over the political creed of the Westminster Assembly. They brought to America no submissive love for England ; and their experience and their religion alike bade them meet oppression with prompt resistance. We shall find the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain came, not from the Puritans of New England, nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish and Presbyterians." It was because such a spirit pervaded nearly all minds, and bound the people together as one, in their efforts for Liberty, that they were finally triumphant. Indeed, how could it be otherwise, especially among those who had themselves, or whose immediate ancestors had periled all for the sake of civil and religious freedom. There was a devoted enthusiasm for popular rights pervading the entire community. There was a stern unshrinking determination to oppose tyranny, exhibited by the patriots of '76, which was itself the prestige of victory, and which has embalmed their memory in the grateful hearts of a liberty-loving people. Our own spirit of independence and love of freedom, we derive from this pure source. And their descendants must sadly degenerate indeed, if they ever become unmindful of the daring spirit, and high resolve, and self-sacrificing devotion which filled the souls of our heroic ancestors. They possessed an enthusiastic love of liberty, and an utter detestation of tyranny, that led them to brave death itself, rather than lose the one or submit to the other. It was a matter of *principle* with them. It was no mere emotion. It was no sentimental or romantic feeling ; no visionary or ideal thing. They entered upon the bloody contest, by which alone they could secure the free and full enjoyment of civil and religious rights, with a fearless determination and a persistent purpose that yielded to no obstacle. All that was dear to them in life was periled in the struggle ; yet they nobly engaged in it with unfaltering resolution. " Liberty

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\* " History of the United States," Vol. 5.





or death" was the watchword. This was the only alternative they proposed to themselves, and they were ready to "do or die," to secure the freedom they prized so much. That a people, who, at the commencement of the Revolutionary War, "had not a regular regiment of soldiers, nor a single fortified town, nor a solitary ship of war; who had neither money, arms, nor military stores,"—should maintain a seven years contest with one of the mightiest and most warlike nations upon the earth; that they should conquer two complete armies, and finally obtain their independence, ought ever to be acknowledged as one of the wonderful works of a wonder-working Providence.

And as often as the anniversary of our nation's birth-day shall return, may it be hailed as a precious memento of the brightest era in the political history of the world. May this joyful day, consecrated by so many and such precious associations of by-gone and eventful times, never dawn without awakening in the heart of every American, the warmest gratitude to Heaven for the priceless blessings of civil and religious freedom; may its annual return ever be hailed with gladness for what it has secured to us, and may we transmit the precious legacy unimpaired and improved to those who come after us; may "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," be guaranteed to every individual of our mighty and growing Republic; may the common interests of humanity ever hold us compact together; may the rich inheritance we have received from our patriotic fathers, never be squandered or perverted; and may the sun never shine between our ocean boundaries upon any other than a FREE, HAPPY AND UNITED PEOPLE!



## APPENDIX.

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### A.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS OF PALMER.

IN the Report of the Legislative Committee, made June 21, 1733, respecting the disputed tenure of the land, it is said that the inhabitants of the town "are now and have constantly, for more than three years past, been supplied with a minister to preach the word of God unto them, who has been supported by a free contribution." It also specifies that "not less than one hundred acres" of land should be "laid out in some suitable and convenient place," as a gift to "the first settled and ordained minister," and an additional lot of the same size for the continued "use of the ministry." No records of the church are found of an earlier date than 1753. Probably none were made previous to that time; consequently nothing definite can be ascertained respecting the precise date of the organization of the church, or of the circumstances attending its formation. Some facts, however, can be gathered from the "Proprietors' Records" and the Town books, which are of interest, and which serve to throw some light upon the ministerial affairs of the town at that early day.

The first minister of whom mention is made, was Rev. ROBERT KILPATRICK, who officiated for them for five Sabbaths in the year 1730. Rev. Mr. WELD followed him and supplied them for three months; after whom Rev. BENJAMIN DICKINSON preached for six months. These were probably "candidates," but neither of them seems to have given satisfaction enough to be called to settle with the people; or else, it may be, they were not sufficiently interested in the infant colony to throw in their lot with it.

Rev. JOHN HARVEY, a native of the north of Ireland and educated before he came to America, was hired to preach May 11, 1731, and

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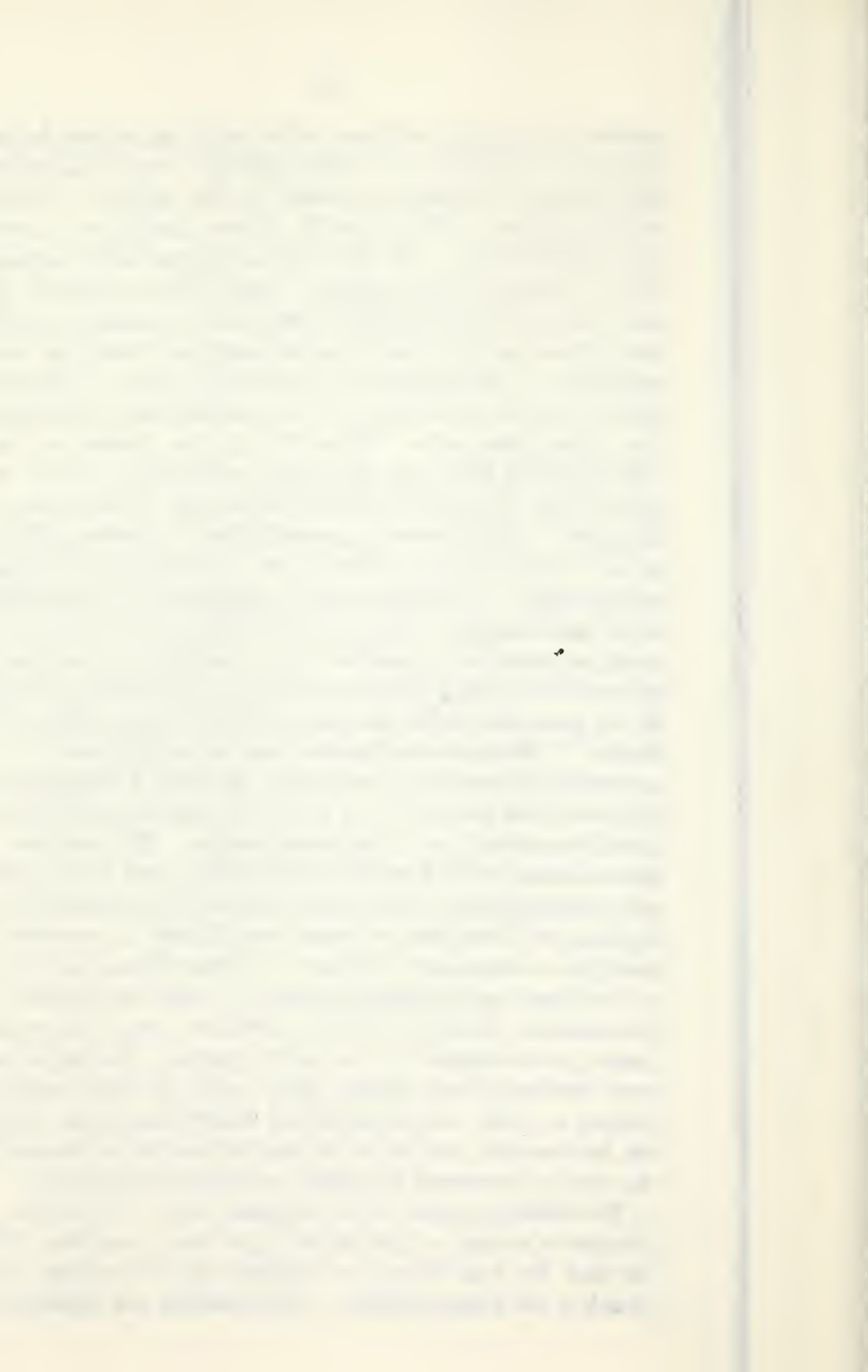
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continued thus to labor with them in the work of the ministry for several years. He was at first "hired quarterly," every inhabitant being visited by a Committee appointed for that purpose, "to know whether they were willing that Mr. Harvey should stay" among them as their minister. The first town meeting was held in reference to his "continuance and support." One of the votes passed was that "the Rev. Mr. Harvey have liberty in the common to get fire-wood, timber and pine, for his own necessary use, during his abode amongst us." He was paid at the rate of £80 a year. "Whatever grain he took toward his rates," it was provided that he should have it at a fixed value, viz:—"Wheat, 8s; rye, 6s; Indian corn, 4s." After preaching more than three years in this way, a "call" was given to him "to continue and settle in the work of the ministry in this place." £100 were to be granted to him "to encourage his settlement," and £80 a year offered as the "stated salary," to be paid semi-annually. "Upon these terms and proposals," with the additional stipulation that "the people should either provide his fire-wood yearly, or grant him a wood lot," he "consented to serve them in the work of the gospel ministry, according to his ability, and as God by his grace shall enable him, and by his Providence continue him therein." Measures were therefore taken to establish him as "the minister of this settlement, according to the order of the gospel, and the laws of this Province." A vote of the town was passed that he should be ordained as a *Presbyterian* minister. The time fixed for the ordination was the first Wednesday in June; and as they had as yet no meeting-house,—the religious services of the community having been held from house to house, three Sabbaths in succession at each place,—they selected the house of James Shearer as the scene of the solemn and interesting ceremony; "unless the Reverend Elders, called to officiate in the work, should see cause, if the weather permit, to do it abroad,"—i. e., in the open air. The people, however, afterwards chose another place, under the broad canopy of heaven, in a field "on the east side of Cedar-Swamp brook, between the brook and the foot of the hill, and within eight or nine rods of the road laid out toward Brookfield, on the South side thereof."

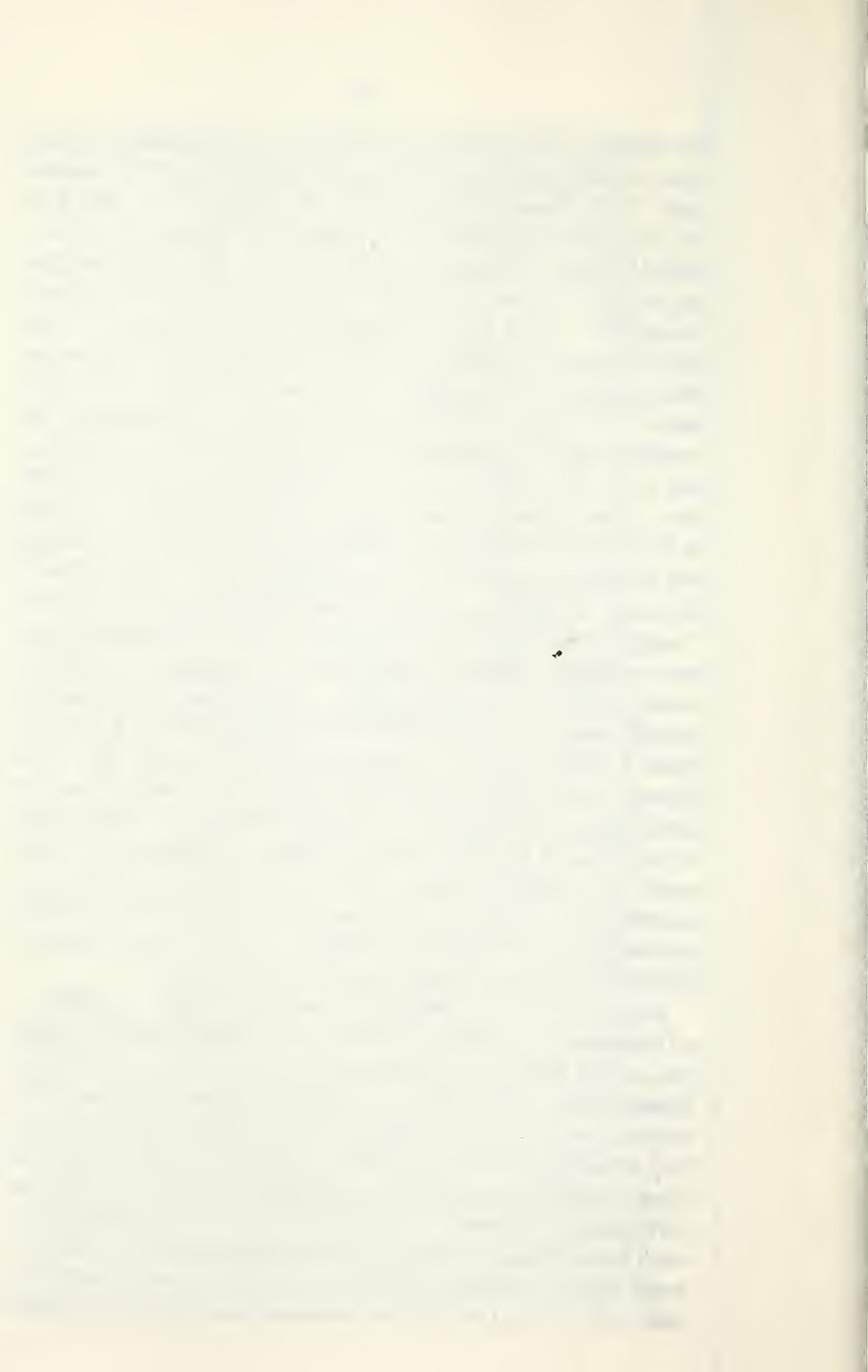
The following account of the important event is taken from the Proprietors' records:—"On the 5th day of June, Anno Dom. 1734, the Rev. Mr. John Harvey was ordained the first minister of the church of the Elbow settlement. The ordination was performed by





the delegates of the Reverend Presbytery, of Londonderry, N. H., upon a scaffold standing on the plain on the East side of the meadow, called Cedar-Swamp Meadow, within Mr. Harvey's lot. The Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Londonderry, preached the sermon, and the Rev. John Moorhead, of Boston, gave the charge." One other Presbyterian minister was present, though what part he took in the services is not specified. They were all countrymen of Mr. Harvey's. Rev. Isaac Chauncey, of Hadley, assisted at the ordination, and perhaps other Congregational ministers. Ample provision seems to have been made for his support, considering the circumstances of the people. In accordance with "a petition from the Proprietors, Settlers and Grantees of the Elbow Tract," it was ordered in Council, April 16, 1734, that "a tax of two pence per acre per annum for three years," should be levied for the purpose of "building a meeting-house, and settling and supporting a minister in the said plantation." On the 11th of November of that year, £12 were assessed upon the inhabitants for "supplying the Rev. Mr. Harvey with a stock of fire-wood for the year ensuing;" £20 were granted for the same purpose the following season, and £37 the year after that. The increase in amount was probably owing to the depreciation of the paper currency of that day. March 5, 1735, there was "surveyed and laid out to the Rev. John Harvey, as the first settled ordained minister, one hundred acres of land, lying on the Westerly side of Cedar Mountain." This was the lot which was to be given as a sort of *bonus* to the first pastor of that small and struggling band. The "ministerial lot" which was to descend as the inheritance of the successive ministers of the place, had previously been designated and allotted to him. It was on the old Brimfield road, about a mile east of the meeting-house.

January 5, 1759, a memorial of James Brakenridge and others, as a Committee of the District of Palmer, was presented to the Legislature, setting forth that "in the grant made them of their lands by the General Court in 1733, they were obliged to lay out for the use of the ministry, and for the use of the school, one hundred acres each; that they accordingly laid out such lands in the year 1735, but they not being conveniently situated for the purposes intended, the inhabitants have purchased a farm of 150 acres, for the use of the ministry, in a much better situation, which cost them more than both the other lots would sell for; and they, therefore, pray that they may be enabled to make sale of the two lots first mentioned, and apply the produce

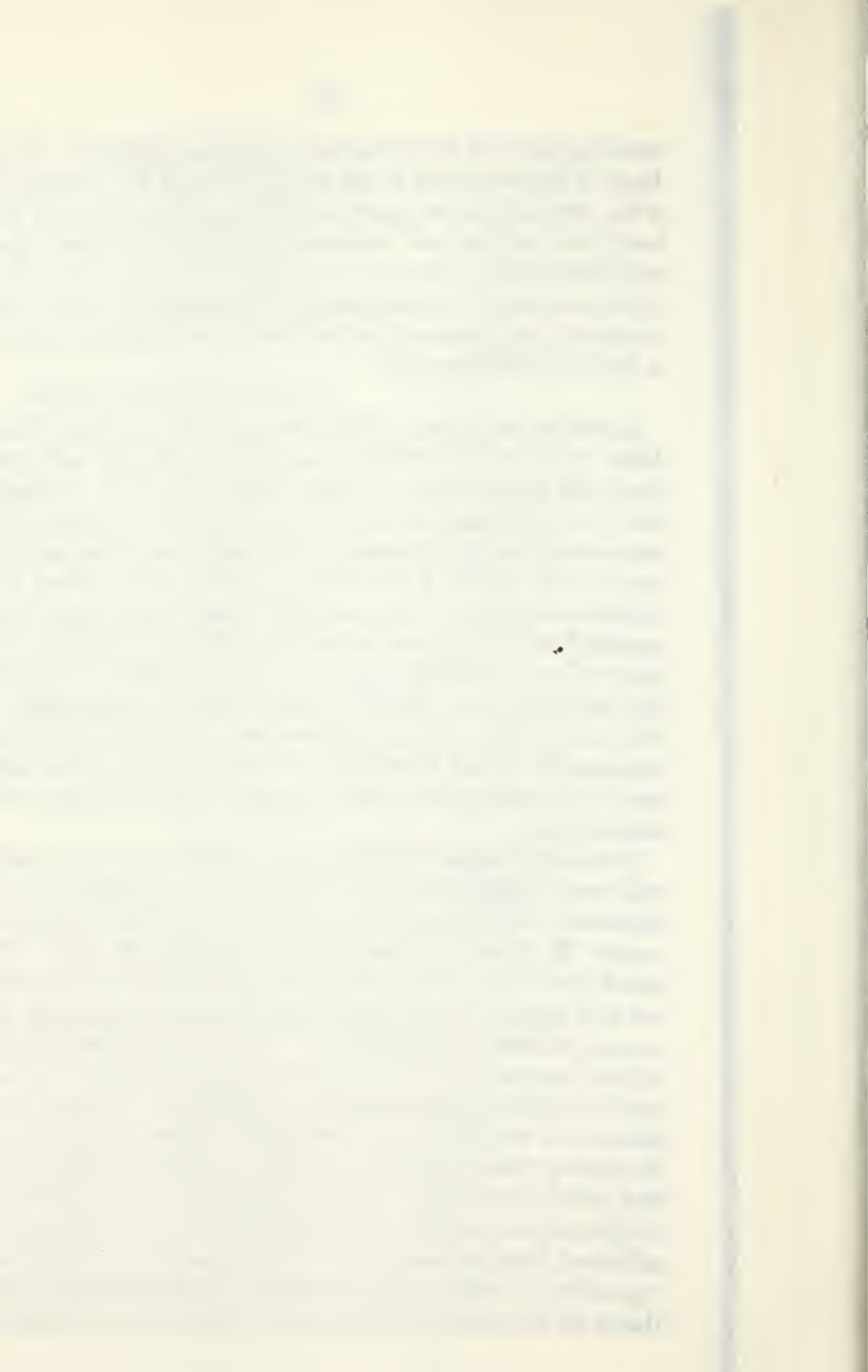


toward payment for the lot they have purchased aforesaid." In the House of Representatives it was read and ordered that "the prayer of this petition be so far granted as that the petitioners be, and they hereby are, authorized and impowered to make and execute a good and sufficient deed, or deeds, of conveyance in the law, of the *ministry* lot mentioned; they purchasing lands of equal value, in the most convenient place they can, to be held for the same purpose as the land is that they shall dispose of."

"Consented to by the Governor."

Most of the inhabitants, at this time, were what was called Scotch-Irish; they were an industrious and frugal people, and made good, honest and upright citizens. Though they were from the "Emerald Isle," and their ancestors had lived in Ireland for a century, they were as really and truly Scotch in their habits, and tastes, and character, as the natives of that famous "land o' cakes." They were of ardent temperament, tenacious of their opinions and strong in their prejudices, which sometimes led them into difficulties, especially with their townsmen of English origin, who had come in there from Springfield and other places. The latter were mostly Congregationalists of the Puritan stamp; while the former were staunch Presbyterians, somewhat like the old Covenanters. They did not harmonize, therefore, in their ecclesiastical matters, and some sharp contentions arose between them.

The English disliked Mr. Harvey, and a few of the Scotch united with them in opposition to him. In a petition to the General Court, September, 1739, they made many complaints against their opponents, accused Mr. Harvey of drunkenness, and prayed for relief. The Scotch party sent a counter-petition, and said hard things of the others, and were especially severe upon Steward Southgate, a prominent citizen and the leader of the opposition. They admitted that Mr. Harvey had been guilty of the charge brought against him, but he had made a public and penitent confession of his fault. The friends and adherents of the minister thus rancorously assailed, were greatly in the majority, both in numbers and influence, and successfully carried their point in this unhappy controversy which was but the precursor of other and sorer conflicts. The General Court ordered the petition of Steward Southgate and others to be dismissed, as it was declared "groundless;" and the town afterwards repaid the defenders of Mr. Harvey for the expense they had incurred in the matter, amounting to

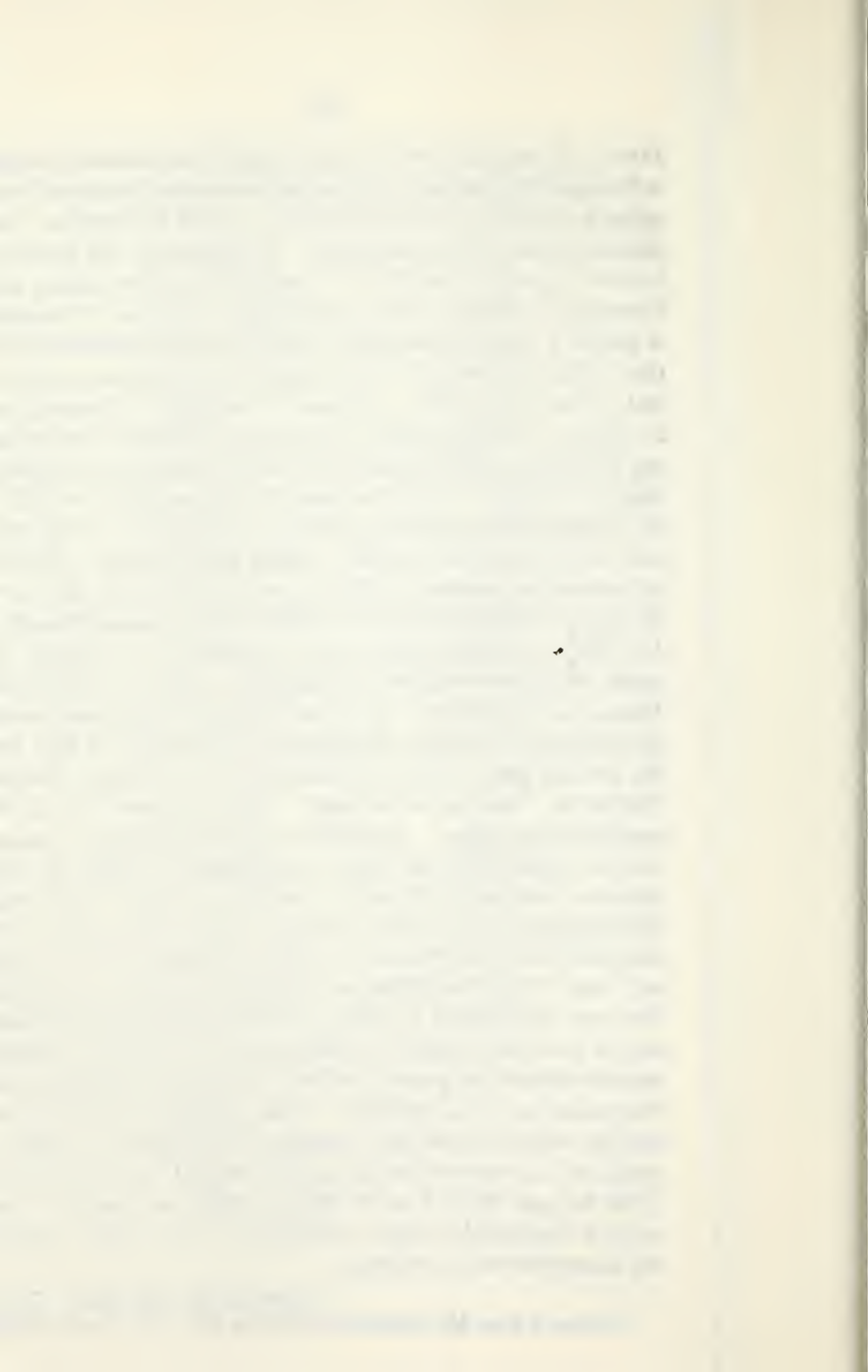


£100. His support, however, seems to have been somewhat scanty ; as the disaffected members, like the similar characters in modern times, appear to have done what they could to "cut off the supplies," and otherwise render his stay unpleasant. He apparently had decided to leave at a specified time, for in a warrant for a town meeting held December 17, 1744, an article was inserted "to choose a Committee to provide a supply for the pulpit, since Mr. Harvey hath fulfilled the time which he determined, and hath bidden us provide for ourselves." But at that meeting £20, "old tenor," was added to his salary and he stayed. In the year 1746, a more serious difficulty arose respecting Mr. Harvey, which ultimately led to his dismissal from the pastorate of the church. He had escorted Mrs. Agnes Little, the wife of Mr. Thomas Little, to and from Boston ; and a public scandal attributed to them gross and unworthy conduct on the journey. The foul and calumnious aspersion, which was never proved, and which even the husband appears not to have credited, for he remained friendly to Mr. Harvey, caused, however, sore contentions in the church and parish, which then embraced the whole town. July 8, 1746, Robert Hunter was delegated to "go to the Presbytery to get them to come up to this place, to settle our differences in the church if may be." He declined going ; and on November 24th of that year, Barnard McNitt was "sent up in his stead." What the result was of this appeal does not appear. April 22d, of the year following, a Committee was appointed by the town to investigate the affair, and afterwards to prosecute Mr. Harvey before the civil court of the State. This apparently was not done, though he seems to have ceased from his public labors, for December 7, 1747, it is stated he had "resigned," and "Capt. Seth Shaw was delegated to go after a minister." The town voted, March 8, 1748, to send to the Londonderry Presbytery to have them dismiss Mr. Harvey from his pastoral connection with the church and people ; and this was done accordingly, though the precise date is not recorded. It was probably early in the summer, for July 5, of that year, they chose a Committee to supply the pulpit, and a receipt of that date appears on the Proprietor's Records, (Vol. 2d, page 275,) from Mr. Harvey, which, as a matter of curiosity, is transferred *verbatim et literatim*. The "Clark" is probably answerable for the spelling :—

"KINGSTOWN, July the 5, 1748.

"Received from Mr. Barnard McNitt the full of my Reates, Sallery





and Wood-reates, during his collection. Ney — the full due to mee since my coming to the Elbowes, which has been seventeen years past, the Elaventh day of may Last, as witness my hand this fifth of July, 1748.

MR. JOHN HARVEY.

“ Witness preasent

“ SAMUELL SHAW, Juner.

“ Recorded this fifth of July, 1748.

“ BARNARD McNITT, *Proprietor's Clerk.*”

Thus closed the labors of “the first settled minister of Palmer.” Mr. Harvey resided for a time in Peterboro', N. H., and then removed to Blandford, in the western part of Hampden County, which was settled by his countrymen, and where he resided on a farm until his death.

For more than five years after Mr. Harvey's dismissal, the church had no pastor. A great variety of preachers casually ministered unto them “the bread of life;” but they were “as sheep without a shepherd,” divided and scattered. November 2, 1748, a call was given to Rev. Alexander Boyd, and £600, old tenor, offered as a settlement, but it was declined. Rev. Dr. Lord, Rev. Messrs. James Morton, — Mitchell, and John McKinstry, among others, ministered unto them for a time, but without uniting the people. July 29, 1752, an invitation was given to Rev. Timothy Symes, to become their pastor, and a yearly salary of £400, old tenor, was offered, exclusive of fire-wood, which the minister was to provide for himself; but this, also, was responded to unfavorably. About this time, too, a kind of preaching was *enjoyed*, which after all was not relished very much; at least an unwillingness to pay for it. was manifested, as will be seen from the following record:—

“At a meeting of ye Inhabitants of this District, Legally convened and assembled at ye Public Meeting House in said place, August 23, 1753, ye Meeting being opened, Andrew Butterfield was chosen Moderator. On the third article in ye warrant for said Meeting, voted that Rev. Ebenezer Knibblows, from New London, Conn., be allowed foure pounds, Sixteen shillings, which is eight shillings Lawful money, for each Sermon he Preached on Sabbath Days, in this District, *except three Sermons which we can prove he preached other men's works.*

ANDREW BUTTERFIELD, *Moderator.*

“A true Entry, pr. SAM'LL SHAW, Junr., *Town Clerk.*”

At length, September 14, 1753, the town, in a legal meeting, concurred in a call which had already been given by the church to Rev. ROBERT BURNS, to “settle with them in the work of the gospel min-



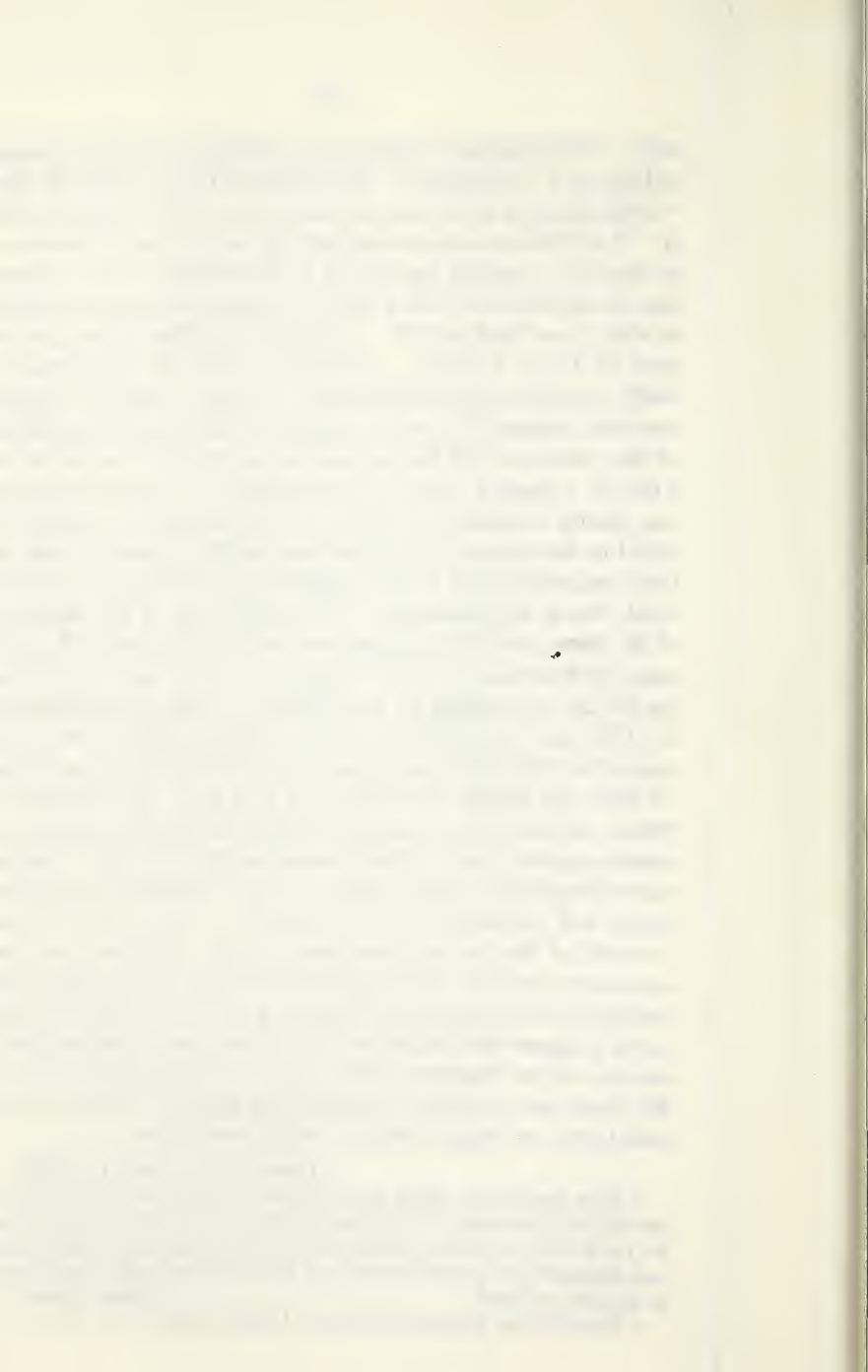
istry." £600, old tenor, equivalent to £80 lawful money, was promised him as a "settlement;" and £400, old tenor, or £53, 6s, 8p, "lawful money as it now passeth from man to man," as annual salary. It is difficult to ascertain correctly the value of these stipulations, for there was a gradual depreciation in the currency of the country from the standard at 4s, 6d, a dollar, as it was at first, to 6s a dollar, at which it was fixed in 1707. In 1750 it had fallen so low as to be rated at 45s. to a dollar. According to this, the "settlement" would be equal to about \$266, and the "salary" to \$177, a meager sum when estimated by modern standards; but it must be remembered that, connected with this provision in money, there was the use of a farm of a hundred acres, and a parsonage, and that the fire-wood was usually furnished gratuitously, so that the amount actually received by the ministers of that day, was probably greater in value to them than what is paid to their brethren and successors in the ministerial office at the present time. The precise date of the ordination of Mr. Burns, who, like his predecessor, was from the north of Ireland, cannot be ascertained; but as it appears from the town records that the bill for his preaching as a candidate was made up to November 15, 1753, and as the Session records, under his ministry, were commenced the 27th of the same month, it is probable that he was ordained about the middle of November of that year. His ministry in Palmer was short; for, three years after his settlement, a serious controversy appears to have existed between him and the church. Charges were subsequently brought against his moral character, which being but too well sustained, led to his dismissal. No account is found on record of the time or circumstances of the separation, but from a statement made in the Session book, May 15, 1758, it seems that the church was at that time without a pastor; and from the town record it appears that the first lot of land, set apart for the minister's use, was sold in September of that year, and instead of it the farm of Mr. Burns was purchased. The following receipt is recorded on the town books, one clause of which is rather noticeable:—

"UNION, CONN., Oct. 14, 1761.

"Then received of Elder Samuel Shaw, Jr., Treasurer of Palmer, the full and just sum of eight pounds, fifteen shillings and five pence, for the District of Palmer; being in full of all accounts, debts, dues and demands *from the beginning of the world* unto the date hereof, as witness my hand.

ROBERT BURNS.

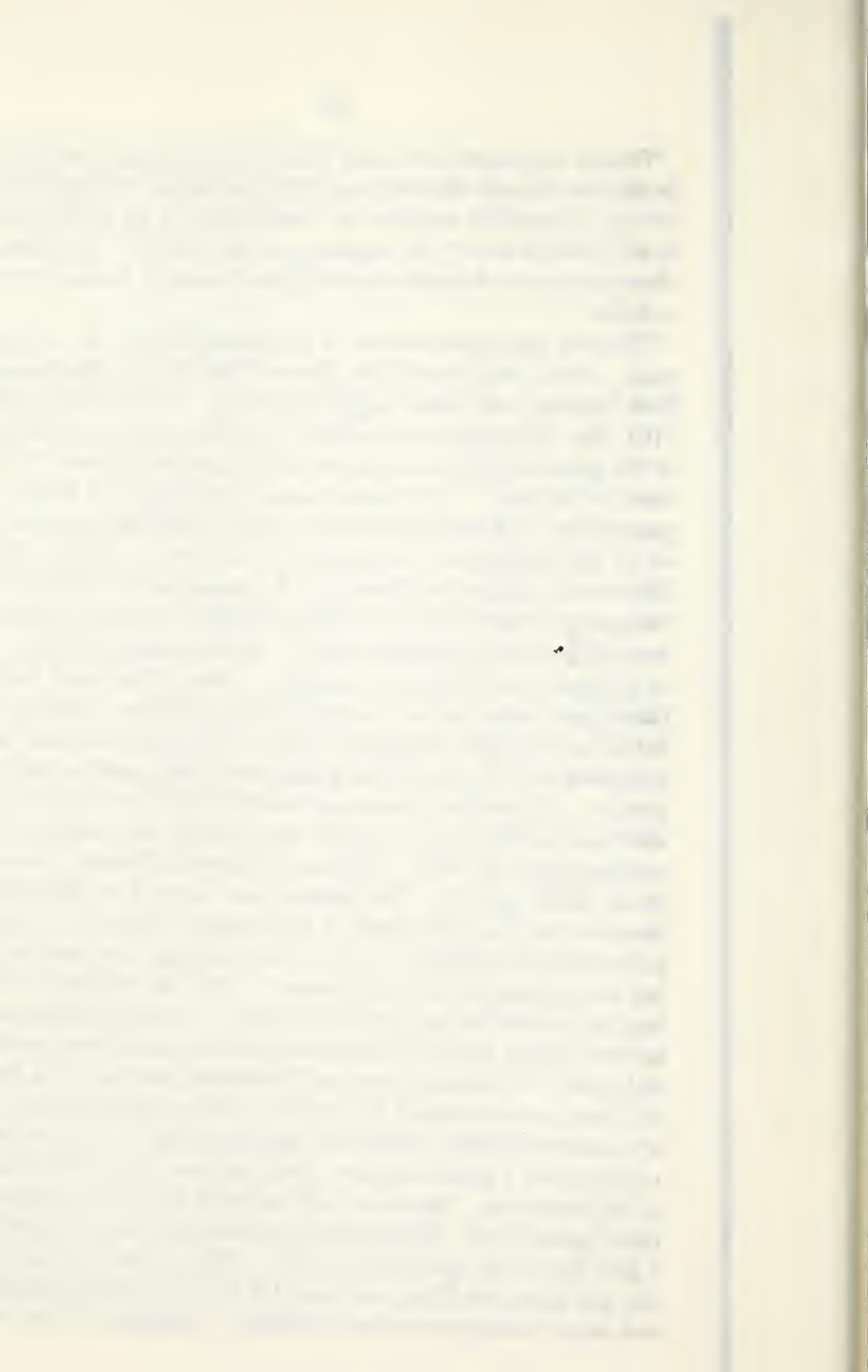
"Recorded by BARNARD McNITT, *District Clerk.*"



There is no prospect here of any *old claims* ever being reproduced, for they are all most effectually cut off by the singular wording of the receipt. It would be needless, one would think, to go farther back in such matters than "the beginning of the world!" Mr. Burns afterwards went to Pennsylvania and spent the rest of his days there on a farm.

The town was again destitute of a resident ministry for several years. During this interval Rev. Messrs. Mitchell, Peck, Curtiss and Noah Benedict, and others, supplied the pulpit. At last, March 3d, 1761, Rev. MOSES BALDWIN received "a call to settle in the work of the gospel ministry, according to the Presbyterian platform of the church of Scotland." £60 current money was pledged to him as a yearly salary, and, also, the hundred acre lot which had been reserved for the minister, on the payment to the town of £150! Mr. Baldwin was a native of Newark, N. J.; was educated at Princeton College, and was the first who received collegiate honors at that ancient and honored institution in 1757. He was ordained at first as an Evangelist, and labored as such for a time at Southhold, Long Island, from whence he was invited to come to Palmer. He was installed by the Boston Presbytery, June 17, 1761, and continued his connection with the church and people for the long period of half a century. His relation to them was dissolved at his own request, and with their amicable consent, by the same Council that ordained his successor, June 19, 1811. He died at Palmer, on Tuesday, November 2, 1813, aged 81. His remains were interred on Thursday, when the Rev. Justus Forward, of Belchertown, delivered an appropriate discourse from Zech. 1: 5. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" But few incidents of his long and eventful life are preserved on record. Like his predecessors, he went through the most serious trials, but his ministry was honored and useful. He survived every male inhabitant, who was at the head of a family when he settled in the place. He was tall in stature, and of a dark complexion; social in his nature, and full of good feeling, rendering him a genial companion, and a welcome visitor at the homes of his parishioners. He was a bold, animated and fervent preacher, full of gesticulation. His manuscript sermons show that he depended a good deal on the spur of the moment. Many of the sentences being just begun, the filling out being left to the quickened intellect and excited feelings at the time of delivery. It is said, *sub rosa*, that





he used to be a great deal more animated in the afternoon than in the morning ; the social habits of the people at that day permitting even the minister to share in the exhilarating influences of Col. Hamilton's hospitality, at whose tavern the "nooning" was generally spent. When going to Monson on an exchange with Rev. Jesse Ives of that place, he would call upon the families on the way and tell them *he* was going to preach.

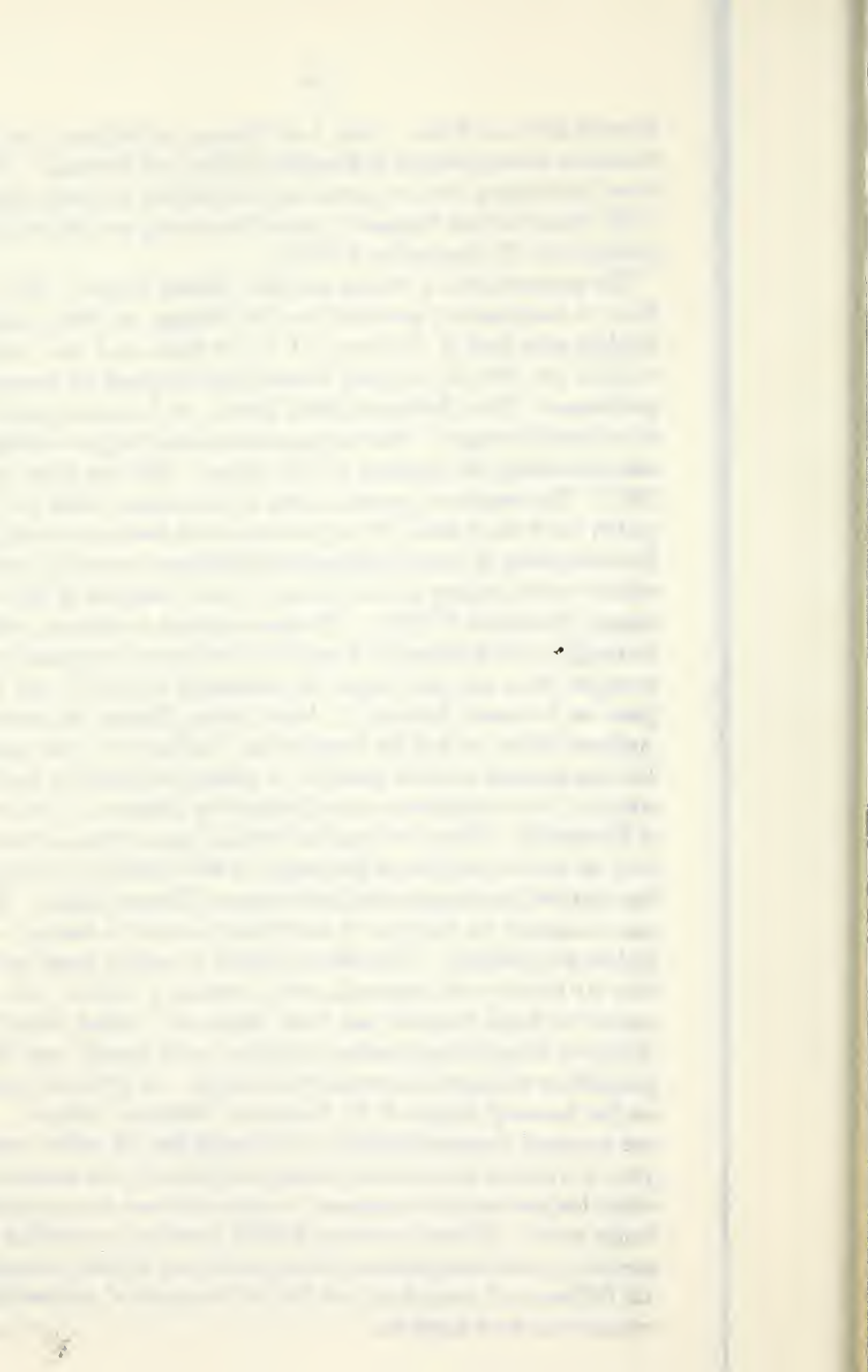
In the "Hampden Federalist," of November 18, 1813, a newspaper published in Springfield at that time, the following remarks occur in an obituary notice :—"As a minister of Christ he was faithful and diligent in discharging the duties of his office. Few have gone through a greater variety of trials ; few have subsisted upon a smaller annual stipend, (about \$250 per annum,) and few have ever manifested a greater attachment to a people, or sought more earnestly for their good. His greatest ambition was to please God. He gloried in maintaining and defending the system of faith, which was 'once delivered to the saints.' His doctrines were pure, for they were the doctrines of the gospel ; his preaching was impressive, for it was the preaching of the cross of Christ ; and his motives were good, for he sought to win souls to God. As a speaker he was above mediocrity. Few possessed an equal talent in gaining the attention, and interesting the feelings of an audience. In all his dealings with man, as well as in the discharge of his official duties, he was punctual and exact. As a husband he was affectionate, and as a parent he was watchful and kind. Mourning friends will regret his loss, and an affectionate people will sympathize with them in their affliction. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.'"

The following matters of ecclesiastical history, though not exclusively pertaining to Palmer, are of sufficient interest to be noticed in this connection ; for at the close of Mr. Baldwin's ministry, the church changed its form of government, and became Congregational. From its origin up to that time, it had been in the Presbyterian ranks. The first Presbytery in New England was constituted in Londonderry, N. H., April 16, 1745, and was called the "Boston Presbytery." At a meeting in Seabrook, N. H., May 31, 1775, a division was amicably agreed upon, and three Presbyteries were formed, called respectively, "The Presbytery of Salem," "The Presbytery of Londonderry," and "The Presbytery of *Palmer*." The latter was constituted of Rev.



Moses Baldwin, of Palmer ; Rev. John Houston, of Bedford ; and the three then vacant churches of Blandford, Pelham and Coleraine. The three Presbyteries thus organized were formed into one body, called "The Synod of New England," whose first meeting was held at Londonderry, N. H., September 4, 1776.

The next minister of Palmer was Rev. SIMEON COLTON. He was born in Longmeadow, graduated at Yale College in 1806, studied theology with Rev. S. Worcester, D. D., of Salem, and was ordained June 19, 1811, by the same Council that dismissed his venerable predecessor. Rev. Zephaniah Swift Moore, of Leicester, preached the ordination sermon. The first general revival of religion in Palmer occurred during the ministry of Mr. Colton. This was in the year 1819. The number of persons added to the church while he was pastor, was 120, of whom 16 only were received from sister churches. In consequence of some dissatisfaction which arose among the people relative to the ministry of Mr. Colton, he was dismissed at his own request, November 13, 1821. He then removed to Monson, where he taught in the Academy for a period of nine years ; having also been preceptor there one year before his settlement at Palmer, and two years at Leicester Academy. After leaving Monson he went to Amherst, where he had the charge of an Academy for a few years. He then removed to North Carolina to assume the care of a new institution, to be established under Presbyterian influence, in the town of Fayetteville. There he remained thirteen years, when, on invitation, he went to the State of Mississippi, to take charge of an institution that had been incorporated by the name of Clinton College. This was an attempt on the part of individuals to revive a decayed and broken down concern. The effort was found to require larger means than its friends could command, and so became a failure. He returned to North Carolina and took charge of a Select School in Ashboro', where he now resides, and where, as he himself says, it is probable he will spend the remnant of his days. In 1846, he received the honorary degree of D. D. from a Delaware College. As one has justly characterized him,—“ He was a man of restless enterprise in whatever he undertook, having a full share of that enthusiasm which has been said to be common to many who bear his respectable family name. He was an earnest, faithful preacher, an excellent instructor, a strict disciplinarian, always patient and hopeful, prompt in the fulfilment of every duty, and full of the spirit of self-sacrifice, whatever his work might be.”





After the dismissal of Mr. Colton, a series of controversies and contentions between the church and the society prevented their uniting in the settlement of another minister till November 9, 1825, when Rev. HENRY H. F. SWEET was ordained as their pastor and teacher, having been invited by the unanimous vote both of the church and of the town. He was a native of Attleboro', and graduated at Brown University in 1822. His ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Jacob Ide, D. D., of Medway. Mr. Sweet was removed from his people by death, February 20, 1827, at the age of thirty-one. During his brief ministry he greatly endeared himself to his parishioners, and even now his name is fragrant among them. Truly "the memory of the just is blessed." Rev. Alfred Ely, of Monson, preached his funeral sermon. He is spoken of "as a man who was unassuming and kind in his manners and intercourse with others. As a preacher, he was interesting and impressive. He was thoroughly Calvinistic in his doctrinal views." A somewhat extensive revival of religion commenced in the place a few months previous to his death. The number added to the church during his short but acceptable ministry, was 23; of whom eight were received from other churches. In the same year, subsequent to his death, 21 others were admitted to the church. •

The next pastor, Rev. JOSEPH K. WARE, was ordained December 12, 1827. He was born in Conway, and graduated at Amherst College in 1824. The sermon was preached by Rev. Heman Humphrey, D. D. There was from the first a minority opposed to the settlement of Mr. Ware, which continued through his ministry. A considerable number left the society; some because of dissatisfaction, and others because of heavier taxes, until the residue felt themselves unable to raise the salary. By request of Mr. Ware, he was regularly dismissed from his pastoral relation to the church, March 16, 1831, and has since been settled in Chapinsville, N. Y.

The ecclesiastical concerns of the town remained in a low and dark state through the summer ensuing, the people being divided and discouraged. A large portion of the time there was no stated preaching. In September, Rev. SAMUEL BACKUS, a native of Canterbury, Conn., and a graduate of Union College in 1811, was invited to preach, and continued the only supply till his Installation, January 11, 1832. He was first settled in Woodstock, in his native State. In consequence of some dissatisfaction, arising partly from his active efforts in





the temperance cause, Mr. Backus was dismissed May 4, 1841, since which time he has not been a settled pastor. He now lives in Brooklyn, N. Y., where he has labored for a time as city missionary, and has also been engaged in teaching.

The pulpit was supplied during the summer following Mr. Backus' dismission, by Rev. Mr. Wetherell. In September, Rev. MOSES K. CROSS, was engaged as a candidate for settlement. He was a native of Danvers, a graduate of Amherst College in 1838, and had studied theology at East Windsor, Conn., and Andover. He was ordained February 2, 1842, the sermon being preached by Rev. Milton P. Braman, D. D., of Danvers. He continued pastor of the church at the centre of the town until an amicable and nearly equal division took place, April 1, 1847, on territorial grounds. The pastor went with the First Church to Thorndike Village, where they worshipped for a time in a hall, but soon erected a neat and pleasant sanctuary. Mr. Cross remained with them till March 7, 1849, when he was dismissed at his own request, on account of ill health. He was afterwards, September 4, 1850, settled at South Deerfield.

Rev. Levi Smith and Rev. Plinius Moody supplied the destitute church for a time, till on Nov. 19, 1851, Rev. SYLVESTER HINE was installed pastor. He was born in Middlebury, Conn., and graduated at Yale College in 1843. He received his theological education at East Windsor. Rev. Prof. Nahum Gale, of that Seminary, preached his installation sermon. Previous to his settlement in Palmer, he had been pastor of a Congregational Church in Ticonderoga, N. Y.

The SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH was organized April 1, 1847, and commenced holding religious services in a hall at the Dépôt Village, where an enterprising and growing community had congregated around an important station of the Western Railroad. They soon commenced to build a meeting-house, and on Wednesday, December 22, 1847, it was dedicated to the worship of God by appropriate solemnities, viz:—Invocation and reading the scriptures by Mr. T. Wilson, (licentiate;) introductory prayer by Rev. C. B. Kirtledge, of Monson; sermon by Rev. E. Russell, of Springfield; dedicatory prayer and benediction by Rev. A. Ely, D. D., of Monson. The exercises were exceedingly interesting; and an additional zest was given to them, from the fact that they occurred on a day hallowed by such sacred associations to every lover of the *Puritans*. The ser-



mon, on Psalm 96 : 6, "Honor and majesty are before him ; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," was characterized by that bold, vigorous and manly style, for which the preacher is distinguished. He considered in it, "Some of the Elements of Strength and Beauty in the Sanctuary ;" and dealt out, in no stinted measure, a sparkling and racy draught of original thought. Dr. Ely alluded most touchingly to the fact that it was the anniversary of that day,—endeared to every true descendant of the Pilgrims,—when they landed on the rock of Plymouth ; and with no roof over their heads but the vaulted dome of the sky, and no music but the howling of the bleak December winds, they poured forth the gratitude of their hearts to that gracious Being who had brought them safely across the perilous deep, and landed them on that sterile shore, where at last they found a *home*,—and with it, what they prized above all else, "freedom to worship God." The interest of the services was enhanced by the excellent performances of the choir, which, under the skillful and efficient training of Mr. Sumner, of Worcester, "discoursed most eloquent music" for the occasion. The house is a neat, chaste, and tasteful edifice, built at a cost of about \$5,000, and reflects much credit upon the enterprise of the infant church and society who have thus secured to themselves a comfortable and beautiful place of worship. May it prove, to them and theirs, to be "*none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven !*"

To this church and society, then recently organized and furnished with a temple, Rev. THOMAS WILSON was called to minister. He was born in Paisley, Scotland, but came to this country in early life with his parents, and resided in Lowell. He graduated at Dartmouth College in 1844, studied theology one year at New Haven, and two years at Andover, and was ordained March 1, 1848. Rev. Lyman Whiting, of Lawrence, preached the sermon. After a ministry of a little more than four years as pastor of this church, he was dismissed at his own request, July 1, 1852, on account of inadequate support. He is now settled in Westford.

### THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Palmer was originally organized in the south part of Belchertown, under the name of the "Belchertown and Palmer Baptist Church," November 16, 1825. The meeting-





house in which the church worshipped, was occupied in common by this people and a Methodist Society. At length they erected their present church edifice at the village of Three-Rivers, which they occupied in January 1833. The name of the church was then changed to the "Baptist Church in Three-Rivers." The number of original members was 24, 11 males and 13 females. Their present number is 111. The succession of pastors has been as follows: Rev. Messrs. Alvin Bennett, Henry Archibald, Tabal Wakefield, David Pease, John R. Bigelow, Prosper Powell, N. B. Jones, Chester Tilden, Joseph Hodges, Jr., Sandford Leach, Addison Parker and Levi H. Wakeman, who is the present incumbent of the pastoral office.

The SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH in Palmer, is located at the Dépôt Village, and was formed by a colony from the first church. Its public recognition, and the installation of Rev. Samuel A. Collins, its first pastor, took place September 29, 1852. A commodious and beautiful house of worship was soon erected, which was dedicated February 22, 1854. It cost about \$5,000.

### THE METHODIST CHURCH.

The METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH at Three-Rivers was organized in 1833, under Rev. A. Taylor, consisting of ten members. Rev. H. Perry then ministered to them two years, and in 1837, a house of worship was erected, and Rev. H. Moulton appointed to the pastoral charge. He was followed by Rev. Wm. Gordon, who, in 1840, was succeeded by Rev. T. W. Gile. Up to 1841 the society divided the labors of the pastor with a society in Belchertown; but in that year it became a station to which Rev. J. Nichols was appointed to preach the whole time. He remained two years, and was succeeded by Rev. D. L. Winslow, after whom was Rev. J. Cadwell, under whose ministry the church numbered 130 members. Mr. Cadwell was followed in turn by Rev. Messrs. Amos Binney, Daniel Chapin, C. L. McCurdy, J. W. Mowry and Nathaniel J. Merrill.

On the 23d of January, 1847, a church was formed at Thorndike Village, by members of this church, who enjoyed at first the pastoral services of Rev. N. E. Cobleigh. In about a year the membership numbered sixty. Mr. C. was followed by Rev. Wm. M. Hubbard, and he by Rev. Mr. Atkins. As the adjustment of a series of diffi-





culties passed through by the Thorndike organization, the two societies came together and formed one large church and congregation, sustaining public worship at the Town Hall, located between the two villages.

## B.

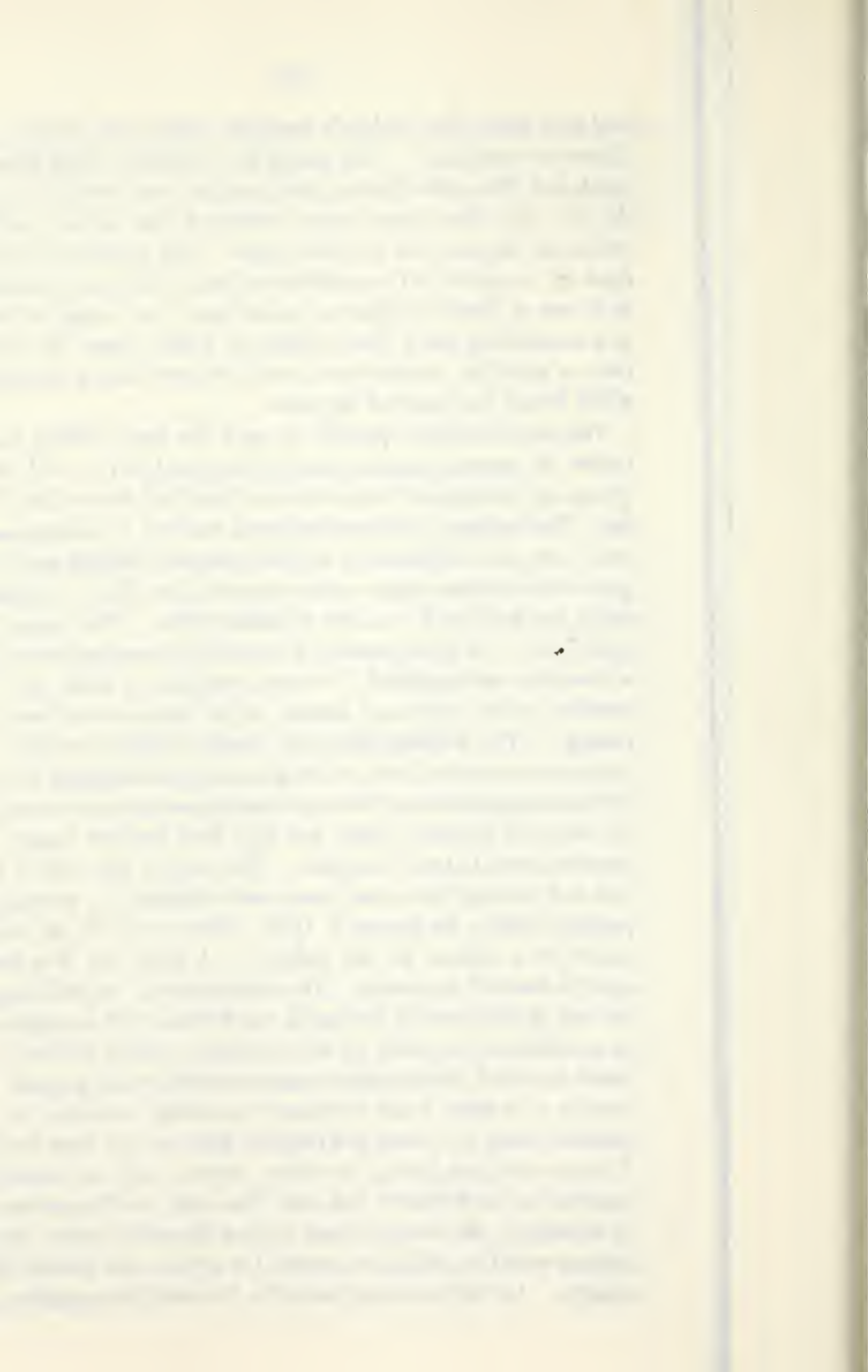
### THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE.

As was the case in nearly all the towns of New England, so here, immediately after the settlement was commenced by the principal colony, the inhabitants turned their thoughts and care to provide for the preaching of the gospel, and the erection of a house of worship. Their particular and anxious interest in this matter formed a distinguishing trait in their character. In the Legislative Committee's Report of 1733, before alluded to, it was enjoined upon the persons then residing here, "to build a meeting-house within two years." The Proprietors, therefore, made arrangements for building their church as early as August of that year, by voting money for that object. The size of the house determined upon was 30 by 36 feet, and the place first selected was "near James Lamberton's fence, by the pine tree marked H., standing on the north side of the path." These specifications, though sufficient to designate the locality at that day, are not definite enough to enable us to fix upon the place now. The people, however, were greatly divided in reference to the most suitable or convenient spot for the meeting-house; and differed so widely, in their plans for its location, that the site was changed several times. At last, to make a final adjustment of the vexed question, the proprietors, at a meeting held February 10, 1735, voted "that every person, proprietor or grantee, shall enter with the clerk, or bring in his vote therein, naming a spot to set the meeting-house on; and that the two spots which shall be the highest in nomination, shall be put to a lot, for a final determination." This vote was duly carried out, when "it appeared that a spott on ye knowl near Crawford's house, and a spott on ye east side of Cedar Swamp Brook, on ye North side of ye



road near where Wm. Kelson's hay-stack stood, were the two spots highest in nomination." The papers for "the lott" were then prepared, and Rev. John Harvey, their minister, was sent for to draw the lot; who, after solemn prayer, performed that service, and thus settled the disputed and vexatious matter. The locality thus decided upon by an appeal to the providence of God,—for even the heathen, as in case of Jonah's shipmates, looked upon the casting of the lot as a sacred thing and a direct address to heaven,—was the same as that on which the meeting-house stood for more than a century, and which formed the centre of the town.

The people forthwith proceed to erect the house, taking suitable timber, by common consent, wherever they could find it; and without giving any recompense to the owners of the land from which it was cut. The *raising* of the meeting-house, small as its dimensions appear to us, and indifferent as we look upon such matters now, was a great event in those days,—quite an era in their life! A special occasion was made of it,—a sort of holiday affair. The town appropriated £7, "to make provision for raising the meeting-house;" and a committee was appointed "to make provision of drink and cakes suitable, and to order and dispose of the same at the time of the raising." This building, like most houses of public worship in the country towns at that time, had only square pews adjoining the walls, for the principal families; the rest of the audience being accommodated, not with well cushioned seats, but with hard benches ranged close together in the body of the house. But even in that day of plainness and poverty, there was some taste displayed in adorning the preacher's desk; for August 7, 1733, "the sum of £5, 2s, was expended for a *cushion* for the pulpit." A great oak tree used to stand in front of the church. The outside door of the building, like the rest of the houses in the parish, was fastened with a wooden latch on the inside, to be pulled up with a string; or when that was gone, raised by a stick run through an aperture made for that purpose. The comfort of a warm house in winter was a thing unknown in those primitive days, for stoves and furnaces had not yet been invented. It was so cold that during the winter months, only one sermon was preached on the Sabbath; and even then they would sometimes get so benumbed, and stamp so hard to keep themselves warm, that the minister would be obliged to suspend the services and dismiss the assembly. On tedious stormy sabbaths the scanty congregation used



to adjourn from the meeting-house to the tavern, and the preacher would take the bar for his pulpit.

As was then customary, there was a huge "sounding-board" suspended over the head of the minister, which seemed to serve no other purpose than to awaken sundry speculations in the minds of the youthful, and perhaps not too devotional part of the assembly, as to what the probable fate of the minister would be if it should fall! There appears, also, to have been a gallery at the end of the house over the entrance, in which the choir sat; and where the young men and maidens loved to congregate. The proprieties of the place and of the service were not always duly kept, then as now; but an expedient was resorted to, which served to allay the mirthful tendencies of the young and buoyant worshippers. October 1, 1750, Messrs. "John Webber and Matthew Hutchins," two of the worthy and sedate patriarchs of the place, were appointed a committee "to sit in the gallery amongst the young people, to inspect their carriage that they may not profane the Sabbath in the time of worship."

Though there was a choir in those days, it was rather to assist the congregation in singing, than to do it all for them as the incongruous custom is now. The singing, for a long time, was conducted after the manner usually called "*Deaconing*;" i. e., by the Deacon, or Precentor as he was sometimes styled, reading the psalm or hymn line by line; and the whole assembly, so far as they were able, aided by the choir, singing it thus piecemeal. In the latter part of the year 1761, soon after the settlement of Mr. Baldwin, a Committee was appointed "to repair and finish the meeting-house," for which laudable purpose £20 were raised. An additional sum of "20 shillings" was appropriated to "Ens'n Ephraim Gates, for which he was to remove back and make narrower the pulpit, minister's pew, and stairs, with the deacon's seat, and make the pulpit lower; all to be done without damage to the work, *or without making it look worse than it does now!*"

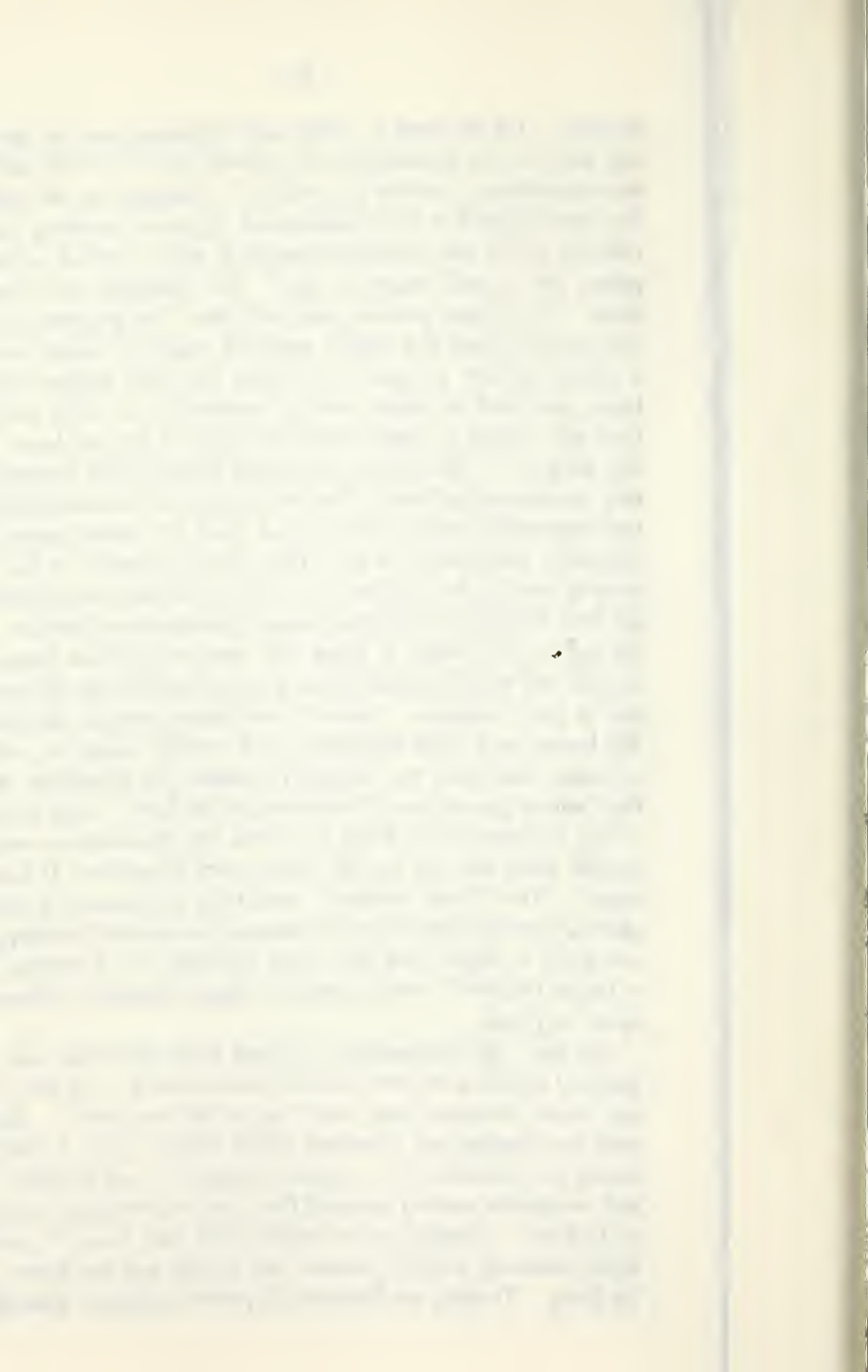
The following June, £50 more were raised to complete the needful work, and in September £9, 1s, 6p, 3f, were added; and the Committee were instructed "to new shingle the roof of the house, clapboard anew the outside, and make new window frames in a handsome size, and glaze the same with glass 8 x 6, and renew the fore-door and sill that is rotten." They were, also, "to proceed to the inside, and new lay such places in the floor as should need it, and make new seats in





the body" [of the house.] They were "to make seats in the gallery, with one row of small pews all round the back side of the gallery, in as convenient a manner as possible." The pews on the ground floor were assigned to the inhabitants of the town, according to the valuation of the real and personal estate of each "head of a family, paying also a small regard to age." In "finishing the meeting-house," the singular provision was made that "the proprietor of any pew, having no part of a window against it, *may have liberty to make a window against it*, equal in size with the other windows of the house, and finish it, outside and in, handsomely and well; and also keep said window in repair during the whole of the time he or they own the pew." Whether any one availed himself of this unusual and very accommodating liberty, does not appear; but the meeting-house, thus rejuvenated, seems to have served them for another generation. Originally built about the year 1733, it was occupied as the only place of worship for sixty-five years, for at that time every family in the town belonged to the parish, except three who were Baptists. At the end of that period, a larger and more commodious house was erected, and the old church became a sort of town hall for the transaction of public business. Before it was thus superseded, however, it had become very much dilapidated; and verified, though in a different sense from what was originally intended, the description which the Psalmist gives of the "tabernacles of the Lord," when he says: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts." The "house swallows" used to be so numerous in the old church, that they disturbed the devotions of the assembled worshippers; and made so much noise with their twittering and fluttering, that "Father Baldwin" could scarcely be heard, though he customarily spoke very loud.

But the "old meeting-house" passed away, like those who had gathered within its hallowed walls for divine worship; but who, in the due course of nature, went the "way of all the earth." Reared amid the struggles and privations of the infant colony, it faithfully served two generations as "a place for prayer;" and no doubt pure and acceptable worship ascended from that unpretending sanctuary to Him who "dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" but who filleth immensity with his presence, and eternity past and future with his being. To many we doubt not, it proved a spiritual birth-place;



and, as "of Zion it shall be said, 'This and that man was born in her,' " so of this church ; and though itself, and its appearance, and almost its remembrance, has ceased to exist on earth, it will forever be identified as the scene of the spiritual conflicts and triumphs of many a human but now sainted soul. It will thus be "enshrined in the amber of celestial reminiscence." The deathless memory will hold it in its tenacious grasp, and its form and existence will therefore be immortal.

## C.

## THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

According to a vote of the town, the one hundredth anniversary of its incorporation, was observed by appropriate festivities at the Town Hall, July 5, 1852. The following account of the interesting exercises of that occasion, is taken chiefly from the "Palmer Journal," of July 10th, edited by Mr. GORDON M. FISK. The day was a bright and beautiful one ; and at an early hour the people began to gather at the Town House, so that by 10 o'clock, the hour appointed for the services, it was judged that nearly two thousand persons were assembled. A long procession of ladies and gentlemen was formed, under the direction of Dr. J. B. THOMAS, as Chief Marshal ; and escorted by the "Belchertown Brass Band," to a beautiful grove about a hundred rods distant, where the Address was delivered. The order of the Procession was as follows :—

1st. The Belchertown Brass Band. 2d. Committee of Arrangements. 3d. President and Orator of the Day. 4th. Reader of the Declaration of Independence. 5th. Clergy. 6th. Invited Guests. 7th. Citizens.

On arriving at the grove the band played till the assembly were seated. The President, JOHN WARD, Esq., then called attention to the Exercises, which took place in the following order :—

I. Prayer by Rev. SAMUEL BACKUS, of Brooklyn, N. Y., and formerly pastor of the First Congregational Society in this Town.

II. National Hymn.—"Let every heart rejoice and sing."



III. Reading of the Declaration of Independence, by F. T. WALLACE, Esq.

IV. Hymn.—“When stern oppression’s iron rod.”

[The singing was performed in an admirable manner by the Choir of the First Congregational Church.]

V. Address by Rev. THOMAS WILSON. Subject,—*The History of the Town of Palmer.*

VI. Music by the Band.

VII. Benediction, by Rev. J. W. MOWRY.

At the close of the services in the grove, the procession re-formed and marched to the Town House, where an excellent and bountiful repast had been provided under the cater-ship of Mr. CHARLES D. FOSTER, of the Thorndike Hotel. At the table, Rev. SYLVESTER HINE invoked the Divine blessing; and the company did ample justice to the palatable viands.

After Dinner the President announced the reading of the Regular Toasts by F. T. WALLACE, Esq.—all of which were responded to with cheers and the booming of cannon.

1. *The Day we Celebrate.*—May each returning Anniversary, of the birth of our National Liberties, find us happy in their enjoyment, and impress us with gratitude to the men of ’76 by whom they were achieved.

2. *The President of the United States.*—HON. MILLARD FILLMORE.

3. *The American Flag.*—The sacred emblem of Liberty; the free sons of Columbia will never suffer it to be disgraced:—

“The Star Spangled Banner, O long may it wave,  
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

4. *The Governor of the Commonwealth.*—HIS EXCELLENCY, GEORGE S. BOUTWELL.

5. *The Manufactories of Palmer.*—Though the times are hard, they are bound to “go,” while *Jacob* and *Joseph* grease the wheels.

[Referring to JACOB B. MERRICK and JOSEPH BROWN, Esqrs., Agents of the “Thorndike” and “Palmer” Manufacturing Companies.]

6. *Old Uncle Sam.*—The great Uncle of all Uncles. He settles a dower of Liberty on all his nephews and nieces.

7. *The Union of the States.*—“The palladium of our National Independence; the guarantee of our National Prosperity; and the pledge of our National Glory.”





8. *The Palmer Declaration of Independence, June 17th, 1776.*—Though of less consequence to the world than our National Declaration, it demonstrates to us, with proud satisfaction, that while the people of Palmer were then ignorant of the deliberations of Congress, or the sanguinary conflict that day being waged on Bunker Hill, they, in a public meeting, pledged their lives and fortunes under the wisdom of Congress, for *National Freedom*.

[This sentiment was received with three cheers. Historians may now make a note of the fact, that the citizens of Palmer made a Declaration of Independence, seventeen days before it was declared by the Continental Congress.]

9. *Uncle Sam's Family.*—May they be content to hold their *thirty-five* farms with all future additions as tenants in common.

10. *The State we live in—Old Massachusetts.*—The land of our Pilgrim Fathers, and the spot where the first blood of the Revolution was shed. She stands a monument of American prosperity and Independence.

11. *The Farmers of Palmer.*—Though the township was once represented as a “very poor piece of land, and the hills high and mean,” yet by their industry it has been made to yield abundantly; and their *fine portly figures* are evidence that *they* have enough and some to spare.

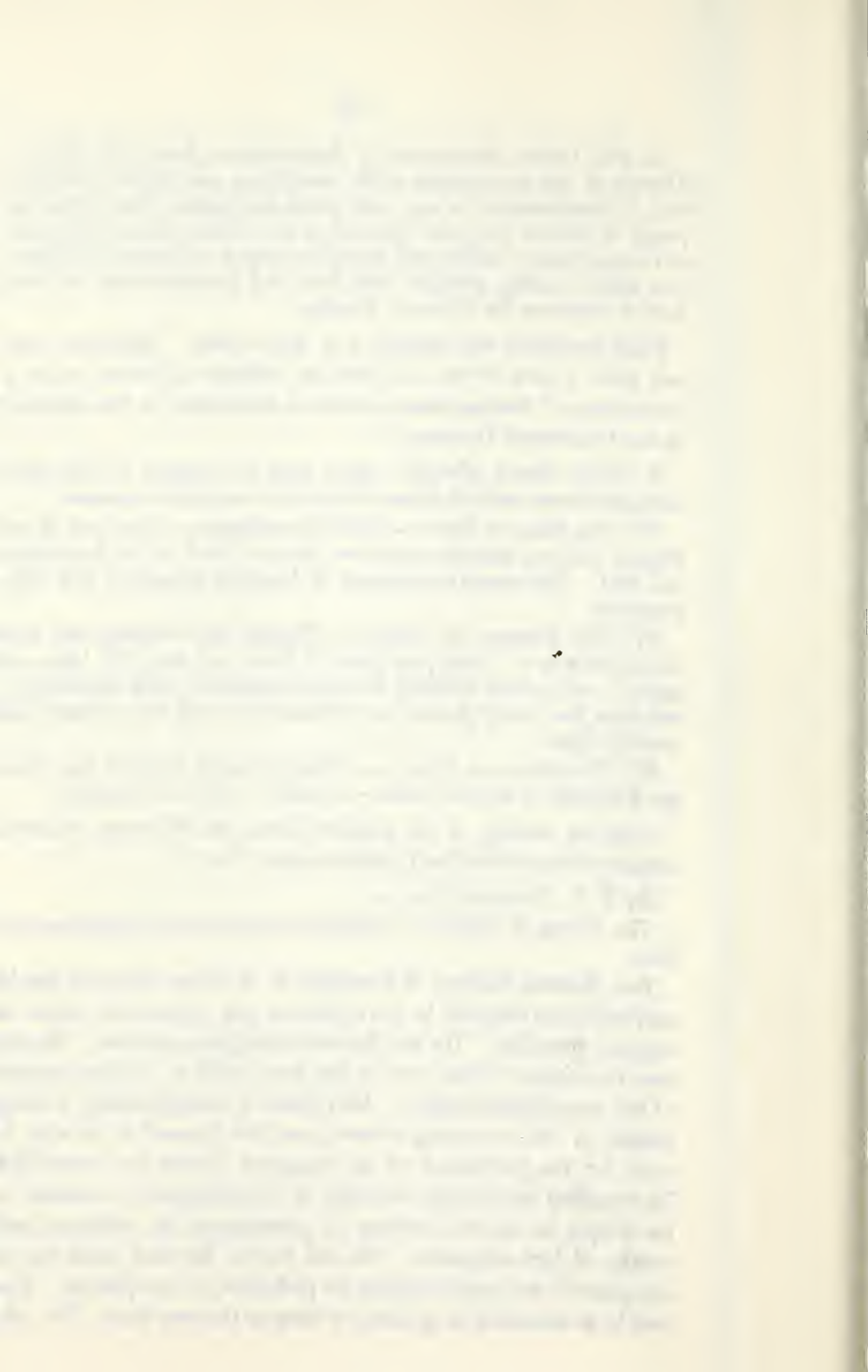
12. *The House we Dine in.*—Though located between four villages it belongs to none of them—it stands “*alone* in its glory.”

After the reading of the Regular Toasts, the following volunteer sentiments were offered and speeches made, viz :—

By F. T. WALLACE, Esq.,—

*The Clergy of Palmer.*—Faithful sentinels on the watchtowers of Zion.

REV. SAMUEL BACKUS, of Brooklyn, N. Y., arose, and said that he supposed some response to the sentiment just propounded might be expected from him. He was the senior clergyman present. He had been the minister of the town for ten years, while as yet they composed but one religious Society. He rejoiced in the opportunity of being present on this interesting occasion, and felt disposed to do what he could for the gratification of his numerous friends now assembled. He remarked that though conscious of unworthiness as a minister of the Gospel, he had no delicacy in pronouncing the ministry itself worthy of high estimation. He said that in his view there was no arrogance in any man's exalting his profession, or his opinions. Yea, that he is warranted in speaking of them as the very best. For why



should not a man in selecting his calling, choose that which in the circumstances is the best? Or why should any man adopt an opinion which for its truthfulness, may not challenge comparison with all other opinions, on the same subject, which can be named? He could, therefore, boldly say that he counted the ministry worthy of all honor, while he could claim no honor to himself.

Mr. B. proceeded to remark, that while this was so, he regarded the just influence of the ministry to be like that of women, silent and unperceived at the moment; an influence, which by persuasive kindness, moulds and guides the habitudes of mind in the other sex. We have heard much of "woman's rights," and he would by no means have these rights denied or abridged. But then these are best maintained by the kindly influence of the family. Let women in this way rule the men as absolutely as they please, and then let them leave it to the men to rule the world.

Here woman may make her influence so felt as to satisfy the largest ambition. But let not woman think to enlarge her powers by bustling and speech-making, and voting and fighting; unless like grandmother Ferrell, of whom we have heard to-day, the door shall be besieged by a panther, a wild Indian, or a rum jug; with which, musket in hand, she may have occasion to hold grave debate on matters of life and death. So should, and so does, the good minister of Jesus Christ form those opinions, and establish those principles of action, from which the world takes its character and by which its destinies are decided. It is the work of the ministry to educate the mind and the heart.

This is not a fitting occasion to dwell on the great and holy ends, for the gaining of which the gospel ministry was chiefly designed. We talk now of the ministry as it acts on the affairs of this world. We speak of it as forming the community to purity, peace, intelligence and happiness. Take away from civilized society, all that has been woven and twisted into its texture by the quiet workings of the christian ministry, and you take away whatever it possesses of the power of self-government and the enjoyment of rational liberty.

While, therefore, Mr. President, we may be often ashamed of ourselves, we wish it to be known that we are never ashamed of our calling, and that we can most cordially reciprocate the sentiment that has been uttered.

In connection with a volunteer sentiment from one of the Commit-





tee, expressing the satisfaction of the assembly in the return of Mr. Backus to this field of his former labors, in order that he might participate in the festivities of this anniversary, Mr. B. made a grateful acknowledgement for the honor intended him. He spoke of the agreeable disappointment he had experienced in meeting so many well known faces, both here and in the different sanctuaries on the day previous, and that these countenances were so slightly changed in the intervening ten years. He expressed his high gratification at the cordial greetings and smiles of welcome with which he had invariably been met. He assured his hearers that he most heartily reciprocated their greetings, expressed his satisfaction in all their prosperity both temporal and spiritual, hoped they might thus, and more largely, continue to prosper not only as living in themselves, but in their descendants till another century shall have passed away. Knowing, he said, that he should never again thus meet them, he affectionately bade them *Farewell!*

By MRS. FRANKLIN MORGAN,—

*The Orator of the Day.*—May his name be as fresh and enduring as the everlasting hills that surround us.

This called up Rev. THOMAS WILSON, who said :—

MR. PRESIDENT,—It is with sensitive yet grateful feelings, that I rise to respond to the flattering sentiment just offered. Though endeared by many sacred and touching ties to a portion of this people,—with whom I have labored for a time in the precious and responsible work of the gospel ministry,—yet I claim no general remembrance save that which may arise from interest in my public labors. It is because the christian minister is identified with all that is good in any community, that he is deservedly held in such high esteem. The prominence given him by common courtesy, is accorded mainly by respect to his official character ; however much he may also be endeared to a people by the individual traits of his own life. The ministry have ever exerted an important and extensive influence in this town. Our fathers, animated by their spirit and instructed by their ministrations, have left us a rich inheritance of political freedom, sound morals and evangelical religion.

There have been a succession of ten ministers in this place, of the Presbyterian and Congregational order. The Church here was primarily Presbyterian, according to the standard and discipline of the Church of Scotland, and so continued till Mr. Colton's ordination in





1811. Of the personal history of the first two ministers, Rev. John Harvey and Rev. Robert Burns, but very little is known. Their successor, Rev. Moses Baldwin, passed a ministry of half a century among this people. He was energetic and animated in his delivery; and might well stand for the portrait of that minister, which the good old Scotch lady described hers to be: "An awfu' po'rful preacher; for he dang th' inside out o' twa Bibles an' three cushions." On one occasion Mr. Baldwin, who was wont to pound the pulpit cushion somewhat sledge-hammer-wise, as he brought his hand down with emphatic force, startled a *red squirrel* that had snugly esconced himself within, to the no small amusement of the audience.

Mr. Baldwin whose ministry was the longest, and Mr. Sweet whose ministry was the shortest, of any of the clergymen of this town, were the only ministers who died while residing in the place. The former after fifty years of toil, the latter after one year and a half of service; both greatly beloved and respected by the people. "But the fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" They have passed away. In the restless march of time they have been borne along with that onrushing phalanx of death, which never retreats. They have long since departed from this scene of their toils and privations, joys and sorrows; but their sepulchres remain with us till this day:

"Each in his narrow cell forever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

May we emulate their virtues, and cherish their memories. May we ever hold on to the principles of civil and religious liberty, which they so nobly exhibited; and may we transmit to a grateful posterity, the blessings we have so richly enjoyed. For

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He lives most  
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best."

By Gen. J. A. McELWAIN, of Warsaw, N. Y.,—

*The inhabitants of my own native town.*—May they live long, and inherit the virtues and integrity of their most worthy ancestors.

By SAMUEL D. BACKUS, of Brooklyn, N. Y.,—

*The memory of the departed.*

By FRANKLIN MORGAN,—

*The Seed planted by our Fathers a Century ago.*—Industry has tended it, faith watered it, and hope watched over its growth. Be-



hold it now a stately tree, under whose branches safely rest a thrifty, prosperous and happy people.

*The Four Villages of Palmer.*—Like the Thirty-five States and Territories of our glorious Union; though divided by local interests, they are always ready to show themselves the inseparable parts of one “stupendous whole.”

By F. T. WALLACE, Esq.,—

*The Ancient Families of Palmer.*—The Kings, the Ferrells, the Cooleys and McMasters. The honor and virtue of the old families are still retained, and will depart only when ‘Dumplin’ takes to itself wings.

By JOHN WARD, Esq.,—

*The Descendants of the first settlers of Palmer.*—May the remembrance of the toils and privations of our ancestors, the fruits of which we at the present time enjoy with prosperity, never be erased from our memory.

By G. M. FISK,—

*The Early Settlers of Palmer.*—Though many of them were Kings, like true Scotts they were opposed to a *kingdom*.

*Our aged Mother Palmer.*—Though in her one hundredth year, she is hale, hearty, and well to do in the world, and we attribute it somewhat to good neighbors; such as old Squire Belchertown, the venerable Mr. Ware, old Mr. Wilbraham, and Madame Monson, a peculiarly virtuous, venerable and devoted old lady—She has done much for our morals.

By A. V. BLANCHARD,—

*The Rev. Samuel Backus.*—It is one of the most pleasant incidents of this occasion that he is here. He is welcome to our homes and our hearts.

Mr. Backus responded, neatly and appropriately. (See page 52.)

By F. T. WALLACE, Esq.,—

*The Orator of the Day.*—He has endeared himself to us beyond expression, by placing in our hands the link which unites us with the past; and our only regret on the occasion is, that though a great public act, it is his last to us.

Mr. WILSON replied in a brief and apt speech;—referring to the interest taken in the historic recollections of the day, and to the duty we owed to posterity to transmit to them what was now veritable history concerning our “illustrious predecessors,” ere it should become only dim and uncertain tradition. He closed by offering the following sentiment:—

*The Town of Palmer.*—Though some other places may bear the palm in antiquarian lore and stirring incident; yet in all that pertains



to the welfare of any community,—to patient industry, general intelligence and sound morals,—may we ever be *Palmer*.

By FRANKLIN MORGAN,—

*Our Living Statesmen*.—To-day we celebrate the memory of those who struck the first blow which gave our country Independence. Let us not forget to do honor to those great Statesmen of our own times, who have successfully labored to defend and uphold our glorious Constitution and the Union of all the States.

By J. B. MERRICK,—

*Hon. Henry Clay*.—(Now no more.) His mortal remains have gone to the dust. His virtues are embalmed in the hearts of the American People. His memory will be cherished until the star-spangled banner shall cease to float in the breeze, and the light of Liberty be extinguished from the earth.

By DR. J. B. THOMAS,—

It is said that the Crown that Queen Victoria wears cost ten thousand pounds. God grant that no American Crown shall ever exceed a dollar and ten cents.

By G. M. FISK,—

*Yankee Perseverance*.—It was first illustrated in Boston Harbor, when a few Patriots went to *take tea* with the British without invitation.

By A. V. BLANCHARD,—

*The Ladies*.—However they may differ with the men on other matters, they are unanimously in favor of the *Union*.

Supposed to be by a rich Bachelor of Palmer,—

*To the Single Ladies of Palmer*.—Though I am in no sense a military man, I am ready to *present arms*.

By MRS. A. V. BLANCHARD,—

*Modern Ladies*.—Though they may possess less courage and bravery than our ancient and venerable grandmother Ferrell, to withstand the assaults of the Indian and the panther, they have improved upon the skill of their ancestors in the duties of the kitchen.—*Modern Men* acknowledge their prowess.

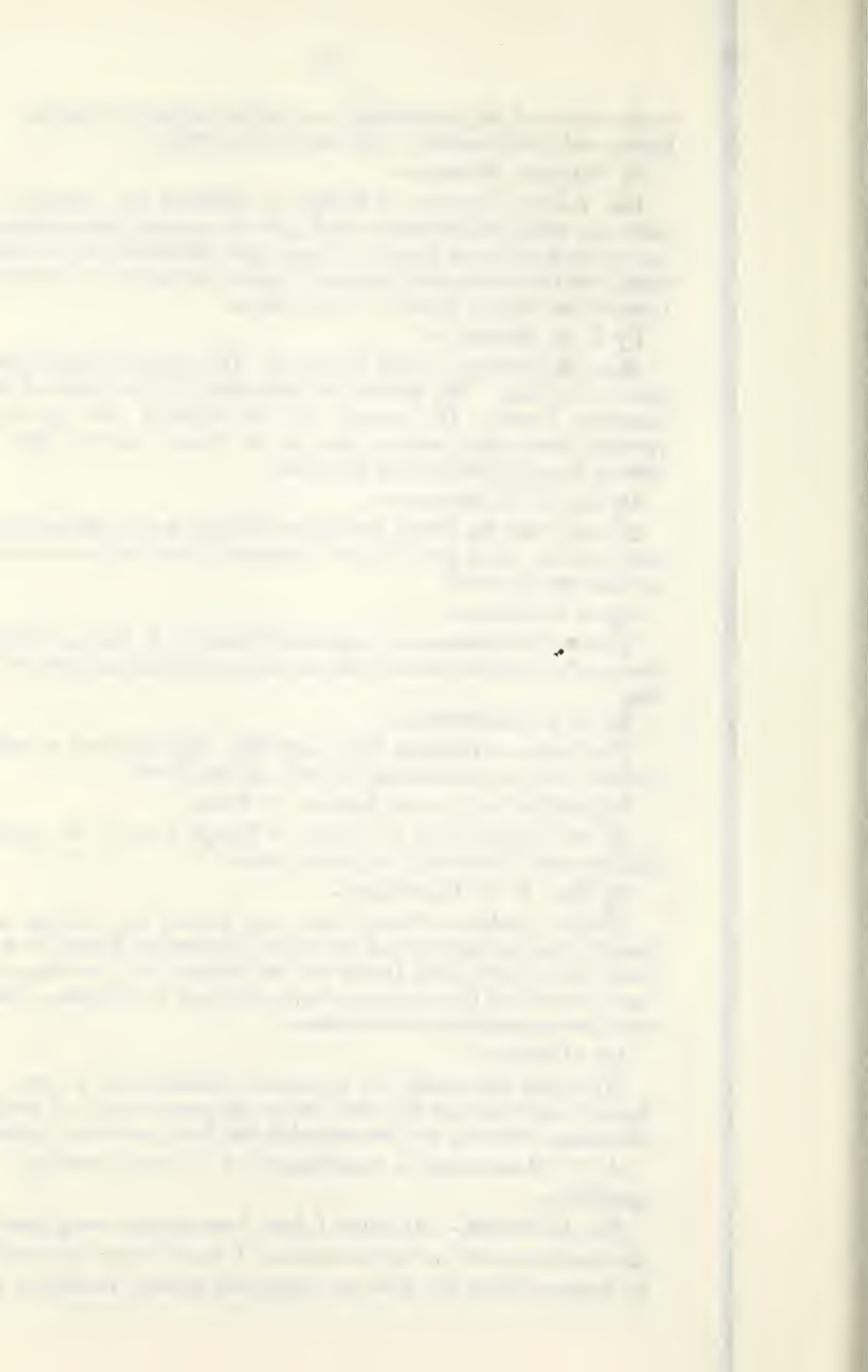
By a GUEST,—

We rejoice that among the numerous manufactories in town, the farmer's wants are not forgotten in an important article of *cutlery*. Gentlemen Farmers, you are reminded that it is just before haying.

A. V. BLANCHARD, a manufacturer of "farmer's cutlery," responded:—

MR. PRESIDENT,—Although I have been engaged many years in the manufacture of *cutting* instruments, I should regret extremely to be instrumental in the least in causing any damage thereby to any-





body ; but there are various instruments used for *cutting*, and many modes of doing the *cutting*, and there is considerable *cutting* done without instruments. I recollect seeing, many years ago, in a picture book, Time represented as an old man with a scythe in his hand, and underneath a verse, which read, "Time cuts down all, both great and small ;" and I have heard of Merchants who were said to have cut the throat of a man with a feather, but if there are any merchants present I think they will pardon me as I do not wish to be personal ; and I have heard of Lawyers who were very *cutting* in their arguments before a jury, especially when they expected a good fee ; I have also heard the ladies accused of *cutting* an acquaintance sometimes ; and when I was a young man I frequently heard conversation about *cutting out*, particularly when a pretty damsel was concerned ; but I was taught in my early days to handle *Edge Tools* with care, and never found any difficulty when I did so ; but not to enlarge on the *cutting* process, I give you sir :

*The young Men of Palmer.*—Whatever other *cutting* they may do, may they not fail to *cut off all their bad habits*.

By. G. M. FISK,—

*Our attentive Host.*—May the good things which he has provided the citizens of Palmer to-day, stimulate them to encourage and *Foster* him.

Mr. FOSTER answered concisely and gave :—

*The Town of Palmer.*—May the sunshine of prosperity and the star of Liberty shed their refulgent rays upon the town for the coming century, as they have done for the century past.

By F. T. WALLACE, Esq.,—

*The President of the Day.*—May his services on this occasion meet with an adequate re-*Ward*.

Mr. WARD responded briefly and gave :—

*Our worthy Toastmaster.*—The sentiments from him come so direct, and with such force that I need a *Wall-ace* to *Ward* them off.

By SAMUEL D. BACKUS,—

*The Town of Palmer.*—May it celebrate its second centurial anniversary, as this, with renewed youth.

Other toasts were offered and remarks made which are not preserved, but which added to the pleasure of a scene which all who participated in, will hold in grateful remembrance. Throughout the festivity the interest was greatly enhanced by the excellent music from the Band. Everything connected with the Celebration passed



off pleasantly and in good order; and, though we do not expect to be there to enjoy it, we hope the next Centennial Anniversary will be observed in like manner; and may it prove to those who shall then participate in it, as joyous as, or, if that be possible, more glad some than the delightful scene through which we have just passed. Our blood will flow in the veins of some of them; and we feel, therefore, that they will be "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." There is thus a community of interests; and we, their Ancestors, send down our Benediction to them, our Posterity.

At the close of the services a Committee of three, consisting of MESSRS. JACOB B. MERRICK, FRANKLIN MORGAN and FREDERICK T. WALLACE, Esqs., were appointed to request a copy of the Address for publication. On motion of Rev. THOMAS WILSON the Celebration was adjourned for One Hundred years!

## D.

### REPRESENTATIVES FROM PALMER TO THE GENERAL COURT.

The following is the Representative History of Palmer from the adoption of the State Constitution to the present time:—

1783 Capt. David Spear.	1810 Jesse King.
1784 Capt. David Spear.	1811 Jesse King.
1785 William Scott.	1812 Alpheus Converse.
1786 Capt. David Spear.	1813 Alpheus Converse.
1787 to 1794 — seven successive years — Capt. David Shaw.	1814 Alpheus Converse.
1794 Capt. Thomas McClenathan.	1815 Jesse King.
1795 Capt. David Spear.	1816 Col. Amos Hamilton.
1796 Lieut. David King.	1817 Col. Amos Hamilton.
1797 Lieut. James Smith.	1818 James Stebbins, Esq.
1798 Isaac Warren.	1819 Voted not to send.
1799 Aaron Merrick.	1820 James Stebbins, Esq.
1800 James Smith.	1821 Clark McMaster.
1801 James Smith.	1822 Clark McMaster.
1802 James Smith.	1823 Voted not to send.
1803 to 1809 — six successive yrs. Aaron Merrick.	1824 John Friuk.
1809 Jesse King.	1825 Voted not to send.
	1826 Asa Ward.
	1827 Voted not to send.

The first of these is the fact that the  
 population of the country is increasing  
 rapidly. This is due to a number of  
 causes, including a high birth rate,  
 a low death rate, and a large  
 influx of immigrants. The second  
 cause is the fact that the country  
 is becoming more industrialized.  
 This is leading to a shift in the  
 population from rural to urban areas.  
 The third cause is the fact that the  
 country is becoming more developed.  
 This is leading to a shift in the  
 population from the interior to the  
 coast.

Table showing the population of the country in 1900 and 1950.

Year	Population	Percentage of Total
1900	1,000,000	100%
1910	1,200,000	120%
1920	1,500,000	150%
1930	2,000,000	200%
1940	2,500,000	250%
1950	3,000,000	300%

Year	Population	Percentage of Total
1900	1,000,000	100%
1910	1,200,000	120%
1920	1,500,000	150%
1930	2,000,000	200%
1940	2,500,000	250%
1950	3,000,000	300%

1828 David King.	1841 Olney Goff.
1829 John Sedgwick.	1842 John Ward.
1830 Cyrus Knox.	1843 Abel Calkins.
1831 Joseph Lee.	1844 Gilbert Barker.
1832 Joseph Lee.	1845 A. V. Blanchard.
1833 David King.	1846 Lambert Allen.
1834 Robert Hitchcock.	1847 A. V. Blanchard.
1835 Cyrus Knox.	1848 Calvin Torrey, Esq., who re-
1836 A. V. Blanchard, Emelius Bond.	signed and J. B. Merrick was elected for the extra session of that year.
1837 Sylvester Parks, John Ward.	1849 J. B. Merrick.
1838 Abel Calkins, Marble K. Ferrell.	1850 John D. Blanchard.
1839 Wm. J. Blanchard, James Gamwell.	1851 Joseph Brown, 2d.
1840 F. Morgan, Asa Shumway.	1852 Amos C. Billings.

## E.

### ACT OF INCORPORATION.

“An ACT for erecting the Plantation called the ‘Elbows’ into a District by the name of Palmer.

“WHEREAS, It hath been represented to this Court that the inhabitants of the Plantation, in the County of Hampshire, called the Elbows, labor under difficulties by reason of their not being incorporated into a District :—

“*Be it Enacted*, by the Lieut. Governor, Council, and House of Representatives, that the Plantation aforesaid be, and is hereby erected into a District, by the name of [PALMER,] bounding as follows : viz., Easterly, on the town of Western\*, Northerly, partly on the plantation called Cold-Spring†, and partly on Ware River Precinct, called Read’s farm‡, Southerly and Westerly on the town of Brimfield ; and that the inhabitants thereof be and are hereby invested with all the powers, privileges and immunities, that the inhabitants of towns within this Province are, or by Law ought to be,

\* Now, Warren.

† Belchertown.

‡ Ware.





invested with, saving only the choice of Representative, which it is represented said inhabitants are not at present desirous of.

*"Be it further enacted,* That all Rates and Taxes heretofore assessed, or ordered to be assessed, pursuant to the Laws and Orders of this Court, upon the inhabitants of said Elbows plantation, shall be levied, collected, and fully completed, agreeable to the Laws or Orders by which they were assessed."

The engrossed Bill passed to be enacted Thursday, January 23d, 1752.—[Proprietors' Record, Vol. I, p. 242.]

## F.

Copy of a letter to John King, the first settler of Palmer, from his mother in England:—

"EDNARSTON, April 20th, 1718.

"DEAR SON,—I received your letter April 6th, and there could nothing in the world be welcomer to me, except yourself. You send me word you are married. I pray God to bless you, and grant you both a happy life together. You send me word you have met with hardships since you left me, which is a great trouble to me; but I am glad to see in your letter, that you have overcome them. But I think I shall never overcome my grief to think you are so far off that I have but little hope of ever seeing you again. But, if it is possible, let us meet once more again, which if I had not hopes of, my heart would break. But since we cannot enjoy your company, I beg of you to miss no opportunity of letting me hear from you.

"I am where you left me, and hope I shall be as long as I live. My son Jonathan and my daughter Mary are with me. I am sorry to hear you live in such a desert place, without neighbors. I often wish myself with you. Some of our neighbors here talk of going. I wish they may. I will encourage them what I can. And, I doubt not, but the Gentleman that brought the letter to me will be a good neighbor and friend to you. I pray God he may be.

"Your brothers and sisters are all overjoyed to hear from you, and



desire you to send as often as you can ; and pray send word how we may direct to you. You send me word you have a son, I pray God to bless him ; he is the only grandson I have. Your brother William and your brother Thomas have two brave daughters apiece. I pray God to bless you and your wife and child. I could wish your child with me. I have sent a small token to you of ten shillings ; and your brothers and sisters have sent one shilling apiece to the child, which is fifteen shillings in all.

“I am glad to hear you live under the ministry of the Gospel. I pray God to give you grace to improve by it. I hear you keep good fires. I often wish myself with you. The Gentleman has almost persuaded your brother Jonathan to come, if I could spare him. \* \*

“Your ever loving mother,

\* \* \* \* KING.”

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